The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 39, No. 3, March 2007

Carolina Country

Growing Gardens

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INSIDE:

- Native North Carolina plants
- The straw bale garden
- Controlling weeds & pests
- What to do in March

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Global Climate Change and Your Cooperative—page 12

Watering chores, water bills! Sweating behind a roaring mower! Spraying poison chemicals and digging weeds...

...you can end such lawn drudgery – here's how!

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Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C., and additional mailing offices. Editorial offices: 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, N.C. 27616. Carolina Country® is a registered trademark of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (ISSN 0008-6746) (USPS 832800)
POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, N.C. 27611.
Subscriptions: Individual subscriptions, $10 per year. $20 outside U.S.A. Schools, libraries, $6. Members, less than $4.
Address Change: To change address, send magazine mailing label to your electric cooperative.

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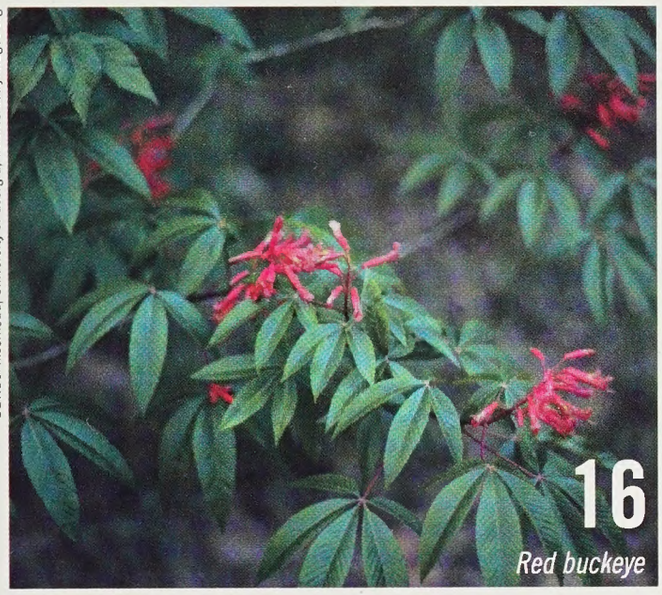

David J. Moorhead, University of Georgia, www.forestryimages.org

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Reilly McDuffie picks daffodils for her mom, dad, sisters and brother in Randolph County. She turned 4 in December. They are a Randolph EMC family. (Susan McDuffie photo)

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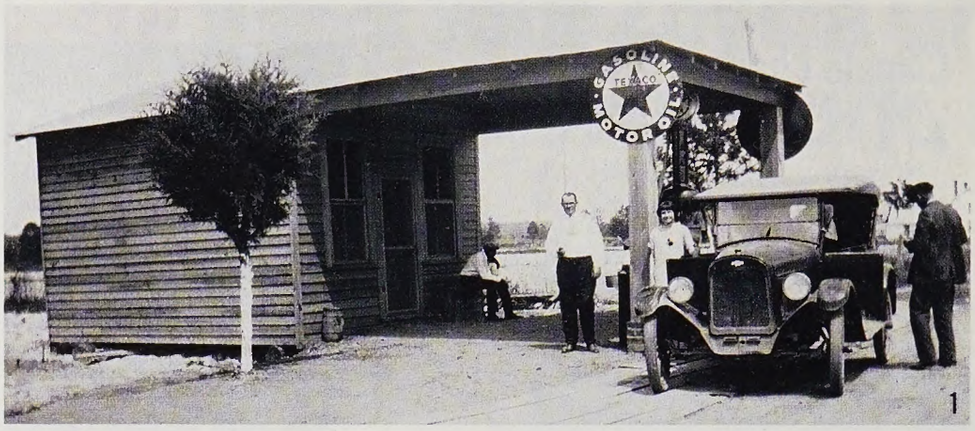
1: Rich Square Roadster

On page 19, the "Rich Square Model T" caught my eye ["The Way We Were," February 2007]. I used a reading glass to see the car pictured. The slanted grill and emblem or "bowtie" looks like it was a Chevrolet, not a Ford. My father had a Model T when I was a boy and a neighbor had a Chevrolet made in 1926. The body lines on the car in the picture look more like a Chevy. Most Fords had a crank hanging in front of radiator—there is none in this picture and the grill is narrower at top than bottom. If this is a Chevy, Ms. Nancy Stephenson of Conway may have a more valuable picture than she thinks.

John Pike / Richlands

Editor's Note: We received a similar notice from Larry A. Trotter of Asheboro, who identified the vehicle as a 1921–1922 Chevrolet 490 Roadster. And Ed Boden, who is restoring a 1930 Model A Ford, said the same thing, noting that, "There's a rivalry between Ford and Chevrolet owners that goes back more than three generations, and each takes umbrage at theirs being taken for the others."



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2: Rhodes Pond sunrise

Driving to work one morning, I saw the sunrise over Rhodes Pond and the reflections in the water were spectacular. Witnessing a sight like this is a blessing from God. I thank God for Carolina Country.

Steve Allen / Godwin / South River EMC

3: "The Gourd Man"

This is my husband, Julian, and with his gourd bird houses. He is called "the Gourd Man" and has a lot of work tied up in his gourds. At 67 he also mows Mama's and our yards. When he isn't making another bird house, he is messing with his gourds and cleaning them out, washing them, sanding them, cutting out holes in them. He sold some for crafts and some for purple martin nesting houses. We live out on Willow Greene Highway in Snow Hill. It's amazing to come through this road and see all the bird houses and gourds up starting February.

Letha Mae Humphrey / Snow Hill
Pitt & Greene EMC

Editor's Note: Purple martins depend on humans as their sole provider of nesting sites. The birds return from their South America wintering grounds each year to the same site. With the right kind of nesting houses, new North Carolina "landlords" may be able to attract first-generation martins in late March and into April. For information, visit www.purplemartin.org

4: Ghost Tree

This is the root structure of a beech tree growing from a bank in Caldwell County. The locals refer to it as the "Ghost Tree."

Randall Walker / Lenoir / Blue Ridge Electric

4

5: Tall dandelions
These are my granddaughters, ages 8 and 4, holding up two dandelions that we took from our flower bed in each of the last two years. I have never seen any this large. They started coming up three years ago and grew out of holes in the 3-hole bricks. I never fertilized or watered them.

Andy Brockinton / Jamesville

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Messin' and gaumin'

Editor's Note: We received a raft of replies to the inquiry that Gwen Hobbs placed here last month regarding the origin of the phrase "messin' and gommin'". Here are excerpts from some of them.

My great-grandmother used to say this, too. The correct term is "messing and gauming," and it means making a mess and leaving dirty handprints or fingerprints. "Gauming" is an obsolete term that means "to smear or smudge." When my siblings and I had been outside playing and came in for a snack, I guess we were like a little troop of mini-tornadoes. My great-grandmother would say, "Here y'all come again, just a-messin' an' a-gaumin' up this house after I just finished cleaning up your last mess!"

My great-grandmother is the only person I ever heard say this. She came from Swain County originally.

Vanessa W. Olson, media specialist / North Asheboro Middle School / Asheboro

It was used in reference to someone leaving a room, usually the kitchen, in a mess or in utter chaos. When you went into the kitchen and left food on the table or on the counters after it had been cleaned was an example of "messin and gommin."

Mildred Price

Many in the family make extra work for mom, usually because they try to do many things at once. Example: Get dressed for school, do some last-minute homework, and eat cereal all at the same time. Result: Cereal on the table, milk everywhere and messy homework. So mom gives them the short, "Quit messin' and gommin'!"

I'm 61 and have four grown daughters. Although I have lived in North Carolina for 25 years, I used the same phrase in West Virginia.

Rose England

I grew up in West Virginia and "messin' and gommin'" was something we heard everyday. I now live in Stokes County, N.C. My grandmother used to say it whenever we got into something we weren't supposed to be in, and my mother used to say it when we made a mess whether it be with our toys or while cooking. "Y'all git out of thar and quit messin' and gommin' in everything!"

Kristina Smith

The word is "gaum," and it means to make dirty or messy. My family is from western North Carolina, and my Dad used the term often.

Karen Scarboro

My parents said "messin' and gommin'". We lived and worked on a small tobacco farm in Surry County—three boys and three girls. Daddy always wanted us to come in from the field, eat lunch and get on back to work. If we prolonged meal time by picking at each other and putting cornbread in milk, pouring molasses on pinto beans or eating only the toasted tops of biscuits, he would holler, "Y'all quit your messin' and gommin' and let's get on back to work!"

Ralph Cox / High Point

My mother might have said, "Don't be messin' with that clothesline. You're gommin' up my clean clothes."

Owen Moore / Candler

I remember as a young girl going with my mother to visit a neighbor lady. Leaving them in the living room, I went into the kitchen where the children were sitting at the table eating dry oatmeal. I didn't join in because I didn't like cooked oatmeal and was sure I would not like it dry. The table was a mess and so were the children. That was a true case of messin' and gommin'.

Doris Ollis / Morganton

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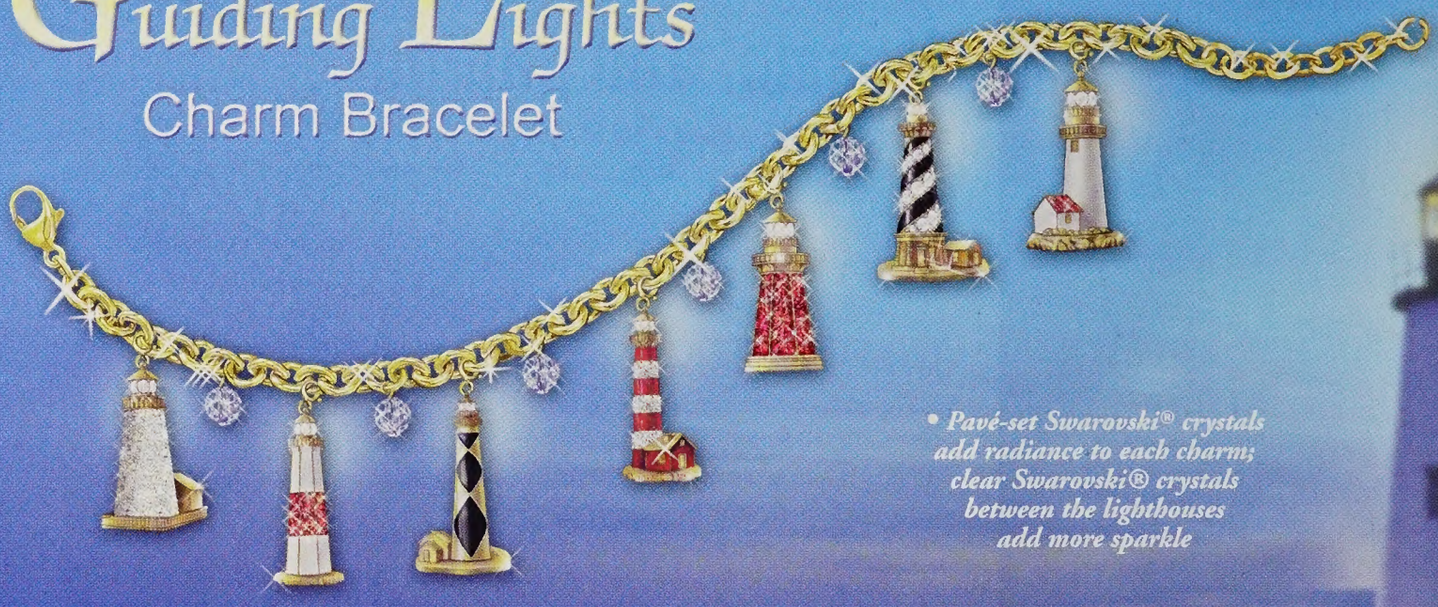

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Peaking generation plants under construction in Anson and Richmond counties

To help meet the increasing demand for energy, North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), the power supply cooperative owned by North Carolina's electric cooperatives, is in the process of building two 300-megawatt peak generation power plants in Anson and Richmond counties. The construction of these generating plants is the cooperatives' way to keep electricity reliable and affordable for members.

What is a peaking generation plant and how does it work?

Peaking generation plants produce electric power during times of peak demand, such as the hottest summer days and the coldest winter days, when wholesale prices for power are generally highest.

North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation has been involved in the development of the new plants for several years. The electric cooperatives forecasted that in order to meet the peak demand growth in years to come, additional peaking resources would be required. As a result of analyzing various options to meet this peak demand, the peaking generation plants were the most economical.

These are called "simple cycle" plants, which often are used for peak power generation. This technology is efficient, safe and reliable. The NCEMC plants will be fueled by natural gas. In the simple cycle process, combustion of natural gas produces expanding hot gas to drive turbine rotors that are connected to an electrical generator which produces electricity. Natural gas facilities are considered to be one of the most environmentally friendly ways to produce electricity. Ultra-low sulfur fuel oil will be used as a back-up fuel when necessary.

Together, the two new plants will consist of 11 total generation turbines. Each site also will have fuel storage tanks, water treatment equipment, water storage facilities, a plant control building and a substation.

A recent photo of the peakload generation plant that cooperatives are building in Anson County. It is expected to be operating in June.

Graphic rendering of the Anson County peakload generation plant that the cooperatives are building.

Why were the particular sites chosen?

NCEMC believed Anson and Richmond counties to be the best locations for the plants because of the availability of land, water and natural gas in those areas, as well as the proximity to Progress Energy transmission lines. Additionally, local officials in these two counties welcomed the facilities and have been very helpful.

The Anson site is approximately 170 acres and the Richmond site is about 260 acres. In addition to accommodating the generation facilities, the acreage is used to reduce the visibility of the plants from the road as well as leave room for aesthetic and environmental enhancements.

When will the plants begin commercial operation?

The Anson plant is expected to begin operation in June of this year, and the Hamlet plant by the end of the year.

Although the plants will be available year-round, the majority of the annual output will be generated in the winter and summer months.

What does this mean for cooperative members?

Currently, NCEMC gets its power from a number of sources and makes it available to member cooperatives statewide. NCEMC is part-owner of Catawba Nuclear Station in York, S.C., and NCEMC also purchases wholesale power from investor-owned utilities such as Progress Energy.

The Anson and Richmond plants are expected to operate approximately 700–1,200 hours annually, which is the equivalent of about 10 percent of the year. These plants will inevitably reduce strain on the system and ensure that members have a dependable source of energy for years to come.

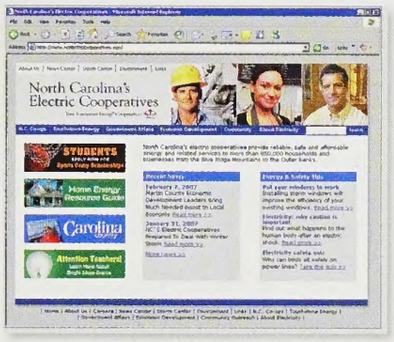
—Morgan Lashley

Support for U.S. energy goals

After President Bush's State of the Union address to Congress in January, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, representing some 900 member-owned energy cooperatives across the U.S., announced its support for the president's commitment to reducing U.S. dependence on foreign fuel and applauded his call for increased production of renewable, domestic energy.

"As the President observed," said Glenn English, CEO of NRECA, "technological advances and increased investment in research will foster greater efficiency across the energy industry. Electric cooperatives continue to integrate new, renewable energy and clean coal technologies into their generation portfolios and remain committed to helping achieve a national goal for the production of 25 percent of the nation's energy supply from renewable sources by 2025."

Cooperatives' state office launches a new Web site



The North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives has launched its new Web site, www.ncelectriccooperatives.com.

The site not only contains information for electric cooperative members, but also includes facts and tips to help all energy consumers manage energy costs and help protect our environment.

The Web site also showcases some of North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives' most successful programs and provides critical storm safety information and phone numbers to report outages in the event of power loss.

Visit www.ncelectriccooperatives.com to learn more about the cooperative structure and the involvement of electric cooperatives in the community and government. You will also find information regarding environmental policies of North Carolina's electric cooperatives and the role of the cooperatives in the economic development of the state.

An update on energy tax credits

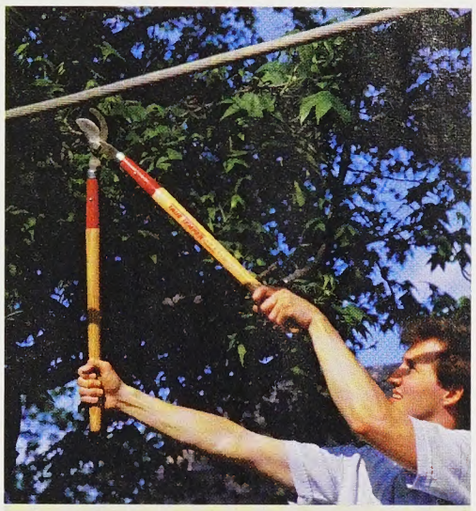
In December, President Bush signed legislation that extends federal tax credits for certain renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The consumer energy-efficiency credits for tax years 2006 and 2007, however, were not extended in the recent law. Therefore, individuals have only one year of eligibility left (2007) to get federal income tax credits for specific energy-efficiency upgrades to homes. There is up to $500 available per household for upgrading doors, windows, roofing, insulation and heating/cooling equipment.

The 2006 legislation did extend the tax credit through Dec. 31, 2008, for projects that produce electricity from wind power, geothermal power, biomass, landfill gas, small irrigation power, and incremental hydropower and trash combustion facilities. It also provides a similar one-year tax credit extension for new properties that produce geothermal power or make use of solar energy, as follows:

- Homeowners who purchase solar water heating, solar photovoltaic, or fuel cell systems
- Businesses that purchase fiber-optic lighting systems, solar energy systems, or fuel cell power plants for new energy-efficient homes
- Energy-efficiency improvements to commercial buildings

For more information on energy tax credits, or to see if a recent home improvement or new construction is eligible, visit the following Web sites:

Alliance to Save Energy: www.ase.org/content/article/detail/2654
IRS for homeowners: www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=154657,00.html
IRS for homebuilders: www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=154658,00.html
Tax incentives assistance: www.energytaxincentives.org

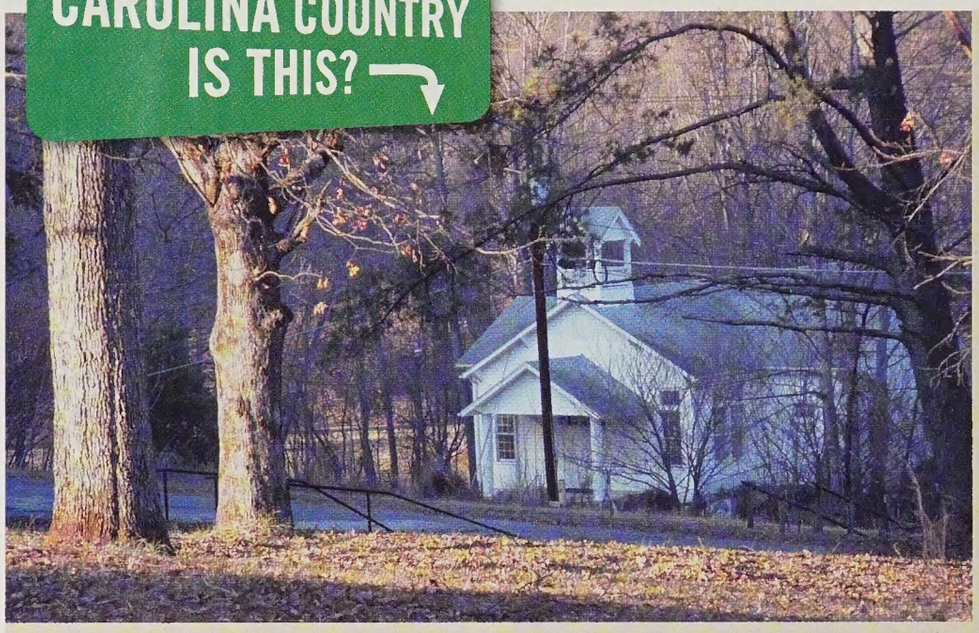


Handle lawn and garden equipment safely

Electrical and gasoline-powered equipment used outdoors should be maintained, stored and used properly, or they can pose a serious safety hazard. Here are some tips for practicing safety precautions when working with appliances outside of the home:

- Carry and use equipment by holding them at the handle and not the cord.
- Don't use any equipment at all near electric power lines.
- Unplug electrical tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts.
- Never work with electrical power tools in wet or damp conditions.
- Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge for the electrical current capacity of the tool.
- To prevent accidental use by children, be sure power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended.
- Handle gas carefully. Never fill gasoline tanks while machinery is on or when equipment is still hot. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline or gasoline-powered equipment.
- Inspect the mower periodically for potential hazards.

WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS?



This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by March 8 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our April issue, will receive $25.

February winner:

The February photo showed the old Enterprise Store Co. at the intersection of Hwy. 42 and Hwy. 22 in the Coleridge community on the Deep River in eastern Randolph County. Ellen Wright told us it was a mercantile store operated by Lynn Albright and also housed a post office and Dude Scott's barbershop. Stephen V. Pate said the 1967–68 movie "Killers Three," with Dick Clark and Merle Haggard was filmed here and elsewhere in the region. Correct answers were numbered and the $25 winner chosen at random was Troy M. Hancock of Siler City, a member of Central EMC.

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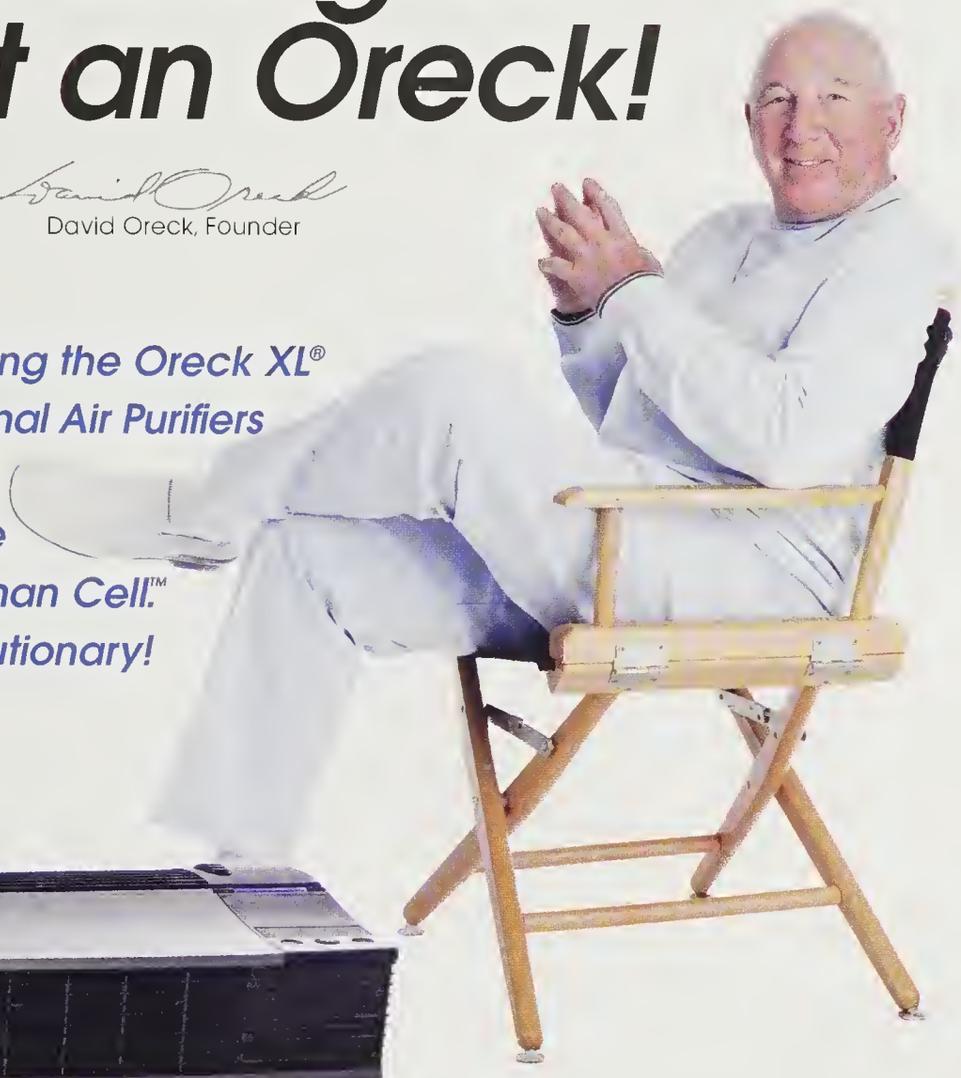

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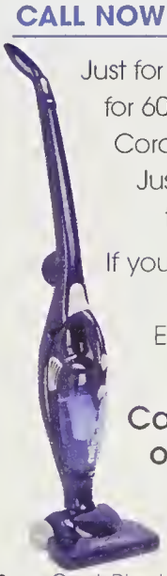

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GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE
Your Cooperative and You
Questions & Answers

What is climate change?
Climate refers to the average weather—temperature and precipitation, among other variables—over a long period of time. The Earth's climate is always changing. Natural climatic changes may occur over seasons, decades and centuries. The periodic rapid warming trend in the eastern Pacific Ocean, known as El Niño, is an example of climate change on a shorter time scale. The term "climate change" is more encompassing than "global warming," which refers primarily to rising temperatures.

What causes climate change?
Natural factors and processes contribute to climate change and include changes in the Earth's orbit and changes in the output of the sun. Human activities, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation, contribute to climate change. Since the mid-1700s, the world's industries have added to the amount of heat-trapping "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere. Changes in the atmosphere—natural and human-made—have affected temperature, precipitation, storms and sea level.

What are greenhouse gases and how are they produced?
Greenhouse gases are chemical compounds that trap heat from the sun in the Earth's atmosphere. This is known as the "greenhouse effect," the natural phenomenon that warms the Earth's surface. These gases occur naturally and are produced by human activity. Carbon dioxide (CO2), the most abundant of the greenhouses gases, is released into the atmosphere when forests and fossil fuels are burned. Fossil fuels include oil, natural gas and coal. Methane, another gas affecting climate change, is released during the production and transport of coal, natural gas and oil, as well as from agricultural practices and from the decay of organic waste in municipal solid-waste landfills. Nitrous oxide ("laughing gas") is another greenhouse gas that is naturally produced by oceans and rainforests and also is released by some industrial processes and fertilizers. Although water vapor is the most abundant greenhouse gas, its atmospheric concentration is not directly affected by human activity.

What do scientists think about climate change?
Scientists agree that greenhouse gases warm the Earth and are accumulating in the Earth's atmosphere as a result of human activities. However, there is uncertainty in scientists' understanding about the impacts of greenhouse gases on the Earth's climate. According to the National Research Council, it is well documented that a warming trend of about 0.7 to 1.5 degrees F occurred during the 20th century in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, and over the oceans. Scientists anticipate that as atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases continue to rise, average global temperatures and sea levels will rise as well and precipitation patterns will change.

What human activities produce greenhouse gases?
The two main sources of human-made carbon dioxide emissions are 1) burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas) and 2) transportation vehicles (cars, trucks, trains, boats, aircraft). A third cause is cutting and burning forests, especially tropical rainforests. Losing forests also reduces the world's ability to absorb carbon naturally.

How do international factors affect climate change?
The global population and worldwide demand for fuel are growing significantly. China is the fastest growing major economy in the world, while India runs a close second. They are among the world's leading producers of greenhouse gas emissions per capita, along with the U.S., Russia, Canada, South Korea, Australia, Saudi Arabia and European countries. People worldwide are driving more cars, building more homes and businesses, and using more fossil fuels to generate electricity, thus leading to more greenhouse gas emissions.

What is the policy debate about climate change, and what do electric cooperatives support?
Climate change issues continue to gain increasing attention in Congress, in state legislatures and the utility industry. Electric cooperatives support the research and development of low and zero-emission energy technologies, new energy-efficiency technologies, renewable and alternative energy options, financial incentives to accelerate the use of new technologies and offset higher costs, and will continue to support voluntary, greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts. The energy industry will know more about the implications and outlook later this year when a report on "Effects of Climate Change on Energy Production and Use in the United States" is expected to be released by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program in the Department of Energy. (See www.climatescience.gov)

How are electric cooperatives involved in contributing to climate change?
Electric cooperatives generate about 5 percent of the nation's electricity, and more than 80 percent of electric cooperatives' generation is from fossil fuels. As a result, electric cooperatives have a well-developed interest in technologies that reduce, avoid and store greenhouse gas emissions.

How does climate change affect production and use of energy?

Changes in temperature could affect our energy demand. Rising air temperatures could increase energy needed for air conditioning, while reducing energy needed for space-heating. The net effects of these changes on energy production, use and utility bills also will vary by region and by season. Patterns in pumping water for agricultural irrigation may be affected as a higher temperature may cause more evaporation than usual.

What is the electricity industry doing to address climate change?

Currently, there is a lack of cost-effective technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel-based electricity generation. Electric cooperatives and other utilities are working to develop new technologies and energy sources to reduce, avoid, and sequester or store emissions. Utilities across the nation are using and promoting alternative and renewable energy options, including wind energy, solar energy, hydropower and biomass (methane gas, wood waste, farm byproducts and ethanol). More than 700 electric co-ops offer renewable energy.

In North Carolina, cooperatives and other utilities promote individual and business participation in the NC GreenPower program and other initiatves aimed at bringing more renewable energy sources into the state's energy mix.

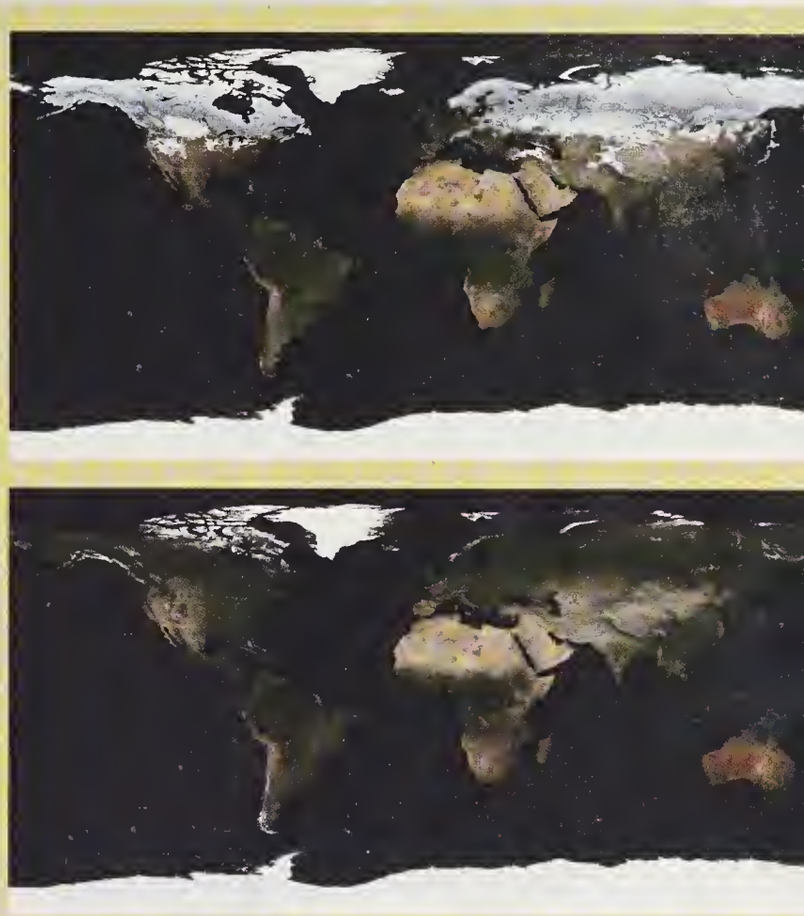
The State's Touchstone Energy cooperatives also have participated voluntarily for the past decade in the Department of Energy's Climate Challenge Program and have been recognized for employing a fuel mix that actively avoids CO2 emissions.

How can new technologies improve climate change concerns?

New technologies that lead to greater energy efficiency are a primary focus for electric cooperatives. These include building modern, environmentally sound power plants and implementing carbon-efficient electric generation, such as nuclear energy, fuel cells and clean-coal technologies. Electric cooperatives are keeping pace with high-tech advancements to improve operations.

What is North Carolina doing about climate change?

Climate change could affect North Carolina in such ways as rising sea level, coastal erosion, higher energy and transportation costs, changing wind currents, and the quality of our water, soil and air. The state legislature appointed a Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change (www.nleg.net) to conduct an in-depth examination of issues related to global climate change. And the Climate Action Plan Advisory Group (www.ncclimatechange.us) is a multidisciplinary panel, managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, working to develop recommendations for specific actions to be taken in N.C. to help reduce or prevent climate change.



A composite satellite map of the Earth's land surface in January and July 2004 from NASA's Blue Marble: Next Generation Project. Snow-covered regions effectively cool the Earth by reflecting sunlight back into space. Changes in the range of snow cover can affect climate changes. (NASA image)

How can families and businesses address issues of climate change?

- Participate in NC GreenPower: www.ncgreenpower.org
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. By replacing the five most-used light bulbs in your house or business, you could save at least $60 per year on energy and help reduce emissions. (See www.energystar.gov)
- Upgrade to energy-efficient appliances and fuel-efficient vehicles.
- Adjust your thermostat down in winter and up in summer.
- Use water carefully.
- Buy environmentally-sound products.
- Consolidate driving trips.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle what you use or discard.
- Be energy-smart at work as well as at home.
- Learn more about climate change and spread the word. Societies, wildlife and natural systems have adapted to changes in the environment throughout history.

Prepared by Carolina Country and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Sources include U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy, Pew Center on Global Climate Change, and World Resources Institute.

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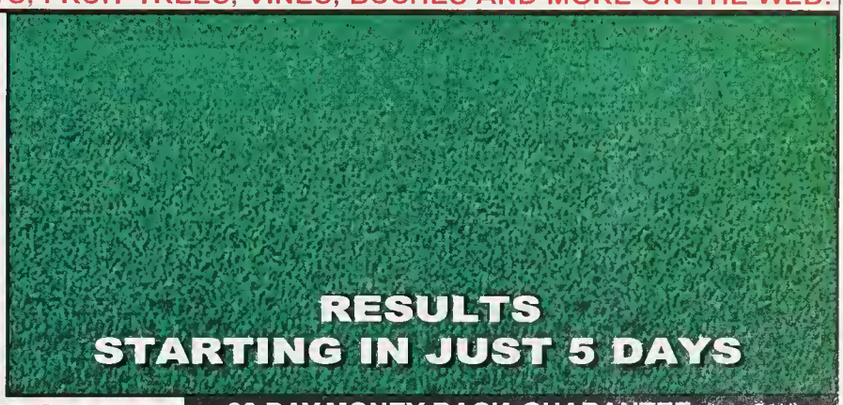

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Native Plants for All Seasons

By Carla Burgess

People who advocate planting native wildflowers, shrubs and trees offer many reasons for including these species in the home landscape. Many native plants are highly adaptable to local growing conditions, so they often flourish in the garden with less fuss. Planting natives also helps preserve biological diversity in a region, especially where the plants' natural habitats are being destroyed. But perhaps the simplest argument for planting native species is that many of them are just plain beautiful. No gardener can resist the tug of a botanical workhorse with a pretty face, whether it comes from across the ocean or down the road.

One horticultural irony is that many native plant species, though they may be common in the fields, meadows and forests that surround us, have historically been hard to find at the store. Gathering plants from the wild is not only impractical—with successful transplanting often difficult to achieve—but it is also largely frowned upon. Some native plants have been brought to the brink of extinction due to over-harvesting and illegal poaching. Over the past two decades, reputable horticulturists have learned to successfully propagate native plants by collecting seeds and cuttings. As a result, many native plants have been introduced into the horticultural trade.

The needle palm is a super-hardy evergreen that adds tropical flair. Photo © Mark Glicksman.

Horticulturists continue to find and propagate native species that may have commercial appeal. They sometimes find a unique strain of wild species—a genetic variant—with unusual color, shape or size. It may be propagated to create a new version, or variety. Two wild species may also cross-pollinate to create hybrid offspring, or plants may be intentionally crossed in the laboratory.

The plants discussed here are all native to North Carolina, with most of them also found throughout a broader geographic region, such as the Southeast. The emphasis is on species that are not as well known but are worthy plants that are underutilized in landscaping. Most of the plants profiled were selected for their provision of ornamental interest throughout the seasons and their suitability for a range of climates and landscape situations throughout the state. Though you can find some of them on the shelves of mainstream stores, with a little legwork you should be able to find most of them through mail-order suppliers or the many native plant nurseries cropping up.

Shrubs and Small Trees

The **flowering dogwood** (*Cornus florida*) remains one of the most common native flowering trees in home landscapes, and its status is well deserved. In the wild it thrives in the filtered sunlight beneath larger trees, but it grabs the limelight in sunny locations in the garden.

Lesser-used white-flowering native trees are equally capable of stealing the spring show and will invite fresh interest to your yard. **Serviceberries** (*Amelanchier* spp.) produce clusters of ornamental white blossoms in spring. The blooms are followed by edible, reddish-to-purple berries. Serviceberry is adaptable to a range of exposures and soil types, growing 6 to 25 feet, depending on species. **Fringe tree** (*Chionanthus virginicus*), sometimes known as old man's beard, has pompoms of straplike flower petals. A popular tree of generations past, it deserves a comeback. Plant it in sun to part shade in moist but well-drained soil.

Carolina silverbell (*Halesia carolina*) is laden with small (about 1 inch), white, bell-shaped blossoms that dangle from twigs in spring. Typically 20 to 30 feet tall, silverbells prefer rich, well-drained soil and light shade to full sun. A relative, *Halesia diptera* (two wing silverbell or snowdrop tree), is a bit showier; the variety 'Magniflora' has larger, more abundant flowers (about 1½ inches).

Chalk maple (*Acer leucoderme*), a relative of the sugar maple, makes a wonderful shade tree for small spaces. It has spectacular autumn foliage in hues of yellow, orange or red.

This deciduous tree ranges from 12 to 30 feet tall. It is usually multi-trunked, with smooth, pale-gray or whitish bark, and is suitable for sun or shade.

River birch (*Betula nigra*) has highly ornamental, peeling bark that may be white, brown, cinnamon or orange in color, which shows to best advantage in winter when its limbs are bare. It has multiple trunks and airy, graceful branches. In the wild, river birch may grow 40 to 70 feet. A dwarf variety, 'Little King', stays about 10 feet tall. 'Summer Cascade' has a lovely weeping form. Though it occurs naturally in moist environments, river birch adapts well to drier soil.

Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*) bears candelabras of red, spiky flowers in spring and tropical-looking foliage. It is typically 8 to 15 feet and has a mounding shape with a spread of about 8 feet. A disadvantage is that it drops its leaves early compared to other deciduous trees. Planting it close to another bushy, flowering shrub will divert attention. Though native to woodlands, it will flower best with more sun. Another stunning buckeye is the **bottlebrush buckeye** (*Aesculus parviflora*). It is a mounding shrub that sports upright 8- to 12-inch stalks of white flowers in midsummer. It makes a great specimen plant but can also be allowed to sucker and spread to form colonies or hedges. Locate it in partial shade to full sun. It is about 8 to 12 feet tall with an 8- to 10-foot spread. Fruits are 1- to 3-inch pear-shaped, tan capsules that split open to reveal glossy brown nuts inside (nuts are inedible). Leaves turn yellow or yellow-green in fall.

Coral honeysuckle bears clusters of trumpet-shaped scarlet flowers and semi-evergreen leaves. Photo by Tammy Kennedy.

Needle palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*) is a well-kept secret that needs to be spilled. Among the most cold-hardy of palms (to Zone 6), it avails even western North Carolina gardeners of a tropical look. Throughout the year, the plant sports fans of glossy, green leaves. It suckers to form a tidy clump, with a typical height of 5 to 6 feet and a spread of about 8 feet, though long-lived plants can become quite large. A record specimen in Texas is 28 feet tall and 13 feet around. A native of wet woodlands of the Southeast, needle palm is adaptable to filtered shade or full sun in moist or dry soils. Another similar-size hardy palm is the **dwarf palmetto** (*Sabal minor*). Site it in sparse shade to full sun. The trunkless palm has leaves a little wider, duller and more blue-green than the needle palm's. It produces clusters of erect white flowers in summer, followed by blue-black berries. With both palms, cold tolerance increases with age.

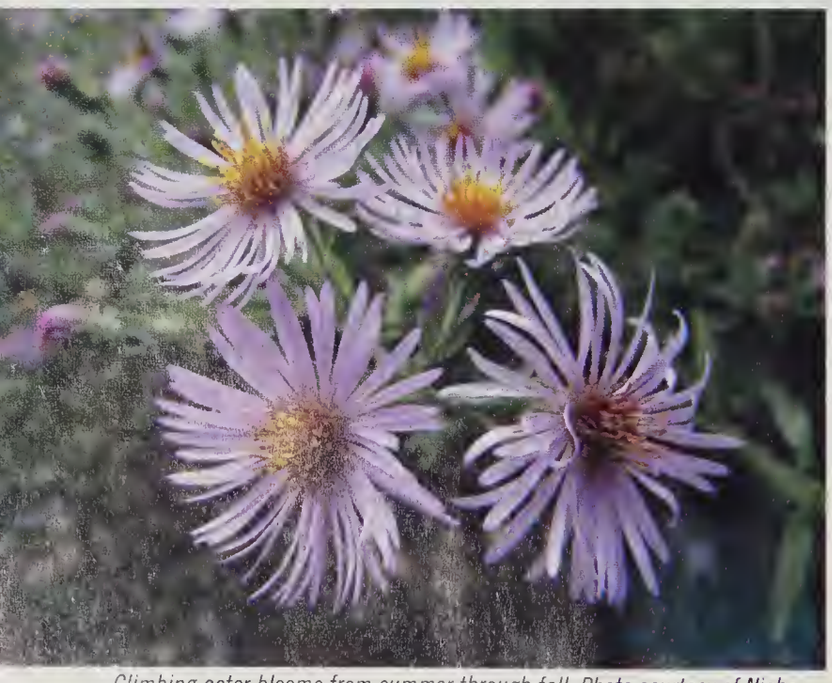
Oakleaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) is truly a native for all seasons. Its midsummer flowers, held in cone-shaped panicles, open creamy, then fade to pink and tan. The leaves turn a rich burgundy in fall, and the exfoliating bark provides winter interest. Plant in sun to partial shade. It tolerates all but dry soils. It is typically 4 to 8 feet tall with a spread of 3 to 8 feet.

Flowering Vines

Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), sometimes called trumpet honeysuckle, is on the short list of North Carolina's most show-stopping native vines. Large clusters of 2-inch-long rich-red tubular flowers (yellow inside) cover the semi-evergreen foliage in spring. It is found in the shade of woodlands in the eastern half of the country. Give it sun and a trellis, mailbox or fence to climb and it will claim the space without swallowing your yard like the invasive Japanese honeysuckle.

If you have a smaller garden but still want to try some of the more vigorous vines mentioned here, try planting them in a sunken bucket to limit suckering and keep them trimmed back.

Coral honeysuckle is easy to discern from the non-native species by its leaves, which are opposite each other in pairs along the stem. It is irresistible to hummingbirds. Two other hummingbird favorites are **crossvine** (*Bignonia capreolata*) and **trumpet creeper** (*Campsis radicans*). These vines are engulfed in spring with orange blossoms. The vines are aggressive, so they are best suited to a natural area where they can climb trees or a substantial structure like the wall of a shed or barn. A large trellis in an area apart from cultivated beds and borders is also a good choice—especially where it would be practical to mow around it to control the many root suckers. Crossvine blooms earliest, with dark-orange and yellow flowers that are wider than trumpet creeper's and shorter, about 1½ to 2 inches long. The dark green leaves are evergreen in warmer climates. Flowers of trumpet creeper are longer, 2½ to 3 inches, with an orange exterior and rosy-orange interior. It blooms later and longer than crossvine, from early summer on. The foliage is made up of glossy, fernlike leaflets. The plant dies back in winter. Probably the most widely used native vine is **Carolina jessamine** (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), prized for its evergreen leaves and the sweet perfume of its yellow late-winter blossoms. The vines have a twining habit. The foliage takes on a bronzy-red tint in winter.



Climbing aster blooms from summer through fall. Photo courtesy of Niche Gardens, www.nichegardens.com.

For those who appreciate a more delicate floral display, there's no topping the exquisite flowers of some of the native **Clematis** species. *C. viorna* has a bell-shaped, rosy-purple flower with a curled, cream-colored lip. *C. virginiana*, or **virgin's bower**, is sometimes confused with the non-native sweet autumn clematis. It has clusters of small, fragrant, white flowers in late summer, followed by highly ornamental feathery seedheads. It can be invasive, so keep it out of cultivated areas.

More rambling than viney, **climbing aster** (*Aster carolinianus*) can be either staked or left alone to ramble through perennial beds. This deciduous charmer is covered in fragrant, lavender-pink flowers from late summer through fall. An unusual native worth seeking out is *Cocculus carolinus*, known as **Carolina coralbead** or **snail seed**. With large, ivy-shaped leaves and round clusters of bright red berries in late summer, it's sure to keep your neighbors guessing.

If you have a smaller garden but still want to try some of the more vigorous vines mentioned here, try planting them in a sunken bucket to limit suckering and keep them trimmed back.

Perennial Wildflowers

With hundreds of gorgeous perennial wildflowers to recommend, it's difficult to pick just a few. But **baptisias** (*Baptisia* spp.) sit at the back of the class raising their hands, begging to be called upon. With tall, luscious flower spikes (reminiscent of the harder-to-grow lupines) rising above blue-green pea-like foliage, this prairie native gets good grades all season. North Carolina has at least eight species of *Baptisia*, blossoming in hues of purple, white or yellow in late spring. Many wild variations have been cultivated for the nursery trade and hybridized as well. The most common baptisia on the market is *B. australis*, often called **blue falso indigo**, which has light-purple flowers and forms clumps of foliage 3 feet tall to 5 feet wide. *B. alba* is incredibly striking, with white flowers that contrast with smoky-colored stems. A coveted new variety is 'Purple Smoke', a variant discovered in Orange County that has the charcoal-colored stems of *B. alba* and flowers more violet than *B. australis*. Baptisias are sun-loving perennials that require a little patience as they mature to full advantage. Over the years, baptisias develop a deep taproot and form mature clumps. Baptisias flourish in average, well-drained soil and are drought-tolerant. The interesting, plump seed pods dry and darken in fall. The plant dies back to the ground in winter. New growth, resembling asparagus tips, emerges in spring.

Purple coneflower is equally at home in cottage gardens, formal borders and wildflower meadows. Photo by David Cappaert, www.forestryimages.org.

Lobelia cardinalis, known as **cardinal flower**, revives the late summer garden with its tall, scarlet-red flower spikes. It likes moist soil in light shade to sun. Though it is short-lived, cardinal flower re-seeds prolifically. It looks equally good in drifts in a natural area or a formal border. The leaves form basal clumps (don't mulch heavily in winter or the crowns will rot). It is typically 3 to 4 feet tall. This exceedingly carefree flower is a hummingbird favorite.

Threadleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*) is a versatile perennial with fine-textured foliage that would be handsome even minus its small but profuse buttery-yellow flowers. About 12 to 24 inches in height, it thrives in average soil in full sun to light shade. The tops may be sheared lightly to encourage season-long blooms. The most commonly sold variety is 'Moonbeam'.

The low-growing **green-and-gold** (*Chrysogonum virginianum*) brightens up the semi-shady border or natural area with its star-shaped yellow flowers. Evergreen in some areas, it likes well-drained soil. About 6 inches tall, it is nice in rock gardens and makes an excellent groundcover for slopes. **Foamflower** (*Tiarella cordifolia*) is another woodland native, topped in spring with short, fuzzy, white flower spikes. Its heart-shaped leaves with prominent, dark veins are arranged in tidy clumps that are attractive all season. Many varieties are available, including some with light yellow-to-peach leaves. Foamflowers can tolerate full shade. They prefer moist, organic soil. They are 6 to 12 inches tall.

Purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*) are widely available in nurseries, and rightly so. There are dozens of varieties, but it's hard to beat the basic model. The rosy-pink, daisylike petals have bronzy-orange, cone-shaped centers. Coneflowers average 2 to 3 feet in height. Grow them in average-to-poor, well-drained soil in full sun. They are very drought-tolerant. Purple coneflowers are homegrown bird feeders. When the seed heads mature, the goldfinches come calling.

Just because a plant species is native to a region does not mean it will perform well anywhere in that area. The important thing to consider is the specific growing conditions in your landscape. Some species native to wet areas, for example, will want to have wet feet in your garden too. Others, though, are adaptable to a range of growing conditions beyond that of their natural habitat. **Bald cypress**, for example, is thought of as a swamp species, but this tree is equally happy in yards and even along urban streets. Also, keep in mind that the sizes given here are guidelines; height and spread may vary depending on where a plant is sited.

Native Plant Sources

Never dig plants from the wild. Sometimes, though, you may be able to "rescue" plants from a site slated for development. Always ask the landowner for permission and be respectful of the property. Make sure that any native plants you buy are nursery-propagated.

For links to suppliers of native plants in North Carolina, visit the North Carolina Native Plant Society's Web site at www.ncwildflower.org/natives/sources.htm.

For links to North Carolina suppliers and beyond, visit the N.C. Botanical Garden Web site at http://ncbg.unc.edu/plants-and-gardening.

"Growing and Propagating Showy Native Plants" by Richard E. Bir is an excellent guide to growing your own natives through seeds or cuttings. It is published by the University of North Carolina Press and is easy to find in public libraries.

Carla Burgess is a Carolina Country contributor who writes the monthly column "Carolina Gardens." She can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com

How to Grow a Straw Bale Garden

By Kent Rogers

Kent Rogers, a Wake County Deputy Sheriff from Wake Forest, has successfully cultivated a vegetable garden in bales of straw. Carolina Country's report on his idea last year drew attention from gardeners and others across the state. Kent points out that the method produces good-looking, healthy plants without weeds, and is especially convenient for people who don't have a large plot of ground to till, or who are physically unable to do a lot of kneeling, bending, raking and hoeing.

He is shown above with some of his 2006 okra plants. Kent is a member of Wake Electric, a Touchstone Energy cooperative. You can contact him by mail at 13028 Powell Rd, Wake Forest, NC 27587, and by e-mail at kent.rogers@earthlink.net

You can start your garden with seeds if you use some potting mix on top of the bales, but I transplanted all of my vegetables from flats and trays purchased from local nurseries.

My first year I used 20 bales of wheat straw and 10 bales of oat straw. Last year I used 55 bales of wheat straw. (Pine straw won't work.)

I recommend getting bales that have been tightly baled. The oat straw bales I bought were lighter and baled looser than the wheat straw, and I learned that they don't hold as much water. I paid $3 for each bale.

Use bales that have synthetic twine if you can find them. The twine won't rot and it will hold the bales together longer. If the bales use regular twine, that's no problem. You may have to put a stake at the end of the bales. The bales I used had regular twine, and they started to rot and break, but I arranged 10 in each row, so the bales tend to hold each other together.

I oriented my bales with the strings off the ground, straw facing up. You can do it either way, but I like the twine off the ground. The transplanting seemed easier with the bales oriented with the strings off the ground.

If you make more than one row of bales, put them wide enough apart so your lawnmower can get between them. And because you'll be watering them, I recommend placing the bales where the water will drain away from your house or away from where you'll be walking.

Preparing for Planting

You'll want to set your plants after all danger of frost has passed, and it takes at least 10 days to prepare your bales for the plants. I will report here what I did to prepare my bales. But note that you also can also prepare your bales by just keeping them damp for about 3–4 weeks prior to transplanting, instead of going to all this work.

Days 1–3: Water the bales thoroughly and keep them damp. Once the bales are wet they are very heavy and hard to move, so make sure you're happy with their location.

Days 4–6: Sprinkle the bales with ½ cup of ammonium nitrate (34-0-0) per bale per day, and water it well into the bales. I didn't have any trouble finding ammonium nitrate from my local ag-supply store. They sold it in 50-pound bags. I have heard, however, that some people have had difficulty finding it in more urban settings. Ask around. You can substitute blood meal for the nitrate. Just use about 1 cup per bale every other day for Days 4–9.

Days 7–9: Cut back to ¼ cup of ammonium nitrate per bale per day, and continue to water it in well.

Day 10: No more ammonium nitrate, but continue to keep the bales damp.

Day 11: Transplant your plants into the bales after all danger of frost has passed. Use your hands or a spatula to make a crack in the bale for each plant. Place the plant down to its first leaf, and gently close the crack back together as best you can. After two years of experimenting, I recommend adding a little commercial potting mix around each plant. Do not use soil from your yard! It could spread diseases, bacteria and weeds to the bales.

Top left: *Tomatoes on a concrete wire trellis, with the vines running in and out of the wire, plus some stretch ties to secure the plants to the trellis.* ***Top right:*** *Pepper plants.* ***Bottom left:*** *Collards.* ***Bottom right:*** *Tomatoes on concrete wire made into an arch. The arch collapsed after a strong rain, so I had to shore up the arch with wood.*

How many plants per bale?

Try 2–3 tomato plants per bale, 3 peppers, 2 squash, 2 sets of cucumbers, 3–4 sets of okra.

Be prepared to stake everything but the cucumbers and squash. I recommend using a trellis system for the tomatoes if you plant a row of any length; otherwise you'll need stakes at least 6 feet tall. I used tobacco sticks the first year, but they are too short. My tomatoes grew way over the tobacco sticks and the vines broke badly.

I planted okra last year and they grew well over 9 feet tall. You'll definitely have to stake them.

I don't think corn will work too well with this method.

I recommend using a commercial, stretch tie that comes in rolls for tying up all of your plants.

I water the bales each day after sunset. You can't over-water because any excess will just run out of the bales. Soaker hoses will work. The main thing is not to let the bales get dried out between watering.

Final Tips

I used Liquid Miracle Gro twice a week. Use a watering can or get an applicator that waters the plants and fertilizes at the same time. It's almost impossible to over-fertilize with Miracle Gro, but be careful with granular fertilizer like 10-10-10.

The bales will start to sprout wheat or oat straw, but that is no problem. If the grass gets too much for you, just whack it off with a knife. I give my bales a "haircut" every so often with a steak knife. It takes no time at all.

Over the past two years, I used pesticides only once on my plants. I had to use some Liquid Sevin on my okra against Japanese beetles. The rest of my plants were pest-free. I also had a good crop of ladybugs, which is a good thing. Maybe it has something to do with the plants being off the ground.

Be prepared to use new bales each year. You may get two years of service out of the bales, but I like starting with fresh bales. This year I'm using the old bales to see how potatoes grow in them.

I highly recommend visiting the Vegetable Garden section at www.davesgarden.com. I started a very popular forum on straw bale gardening with other bale gardeners from all over the U.S. and Canada. You'll find a lot of photos and a tremendous amount of information on this subject.

And If That Doesn't Work, Try This!

Your Ideas For Controlling Weeds and Pests In Your Garden

Praying mantis

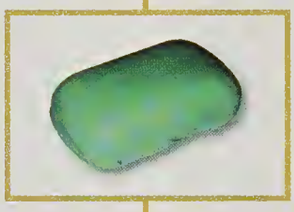
I moved to North Carolina eight years ago and have enjoyed working in my flower garden. I was having a constant battle with a few garden pests.

I saw a stunning praying mantis in my garden two years ago, and I watched her every day. I noticed her eating the beetles, so I was very careful not to harm her. At the end of the summer, she made her egg case on the mock orange, and she disappeared. In the spring I had the joy of seeing hundreds of her offspring hatch and spread through the garden. So last summer there was a huge difference in the garden pests!

Last fall I counted three egg cases, so this summer not only will I have less pests, but I will enjoy watching those incredible creatures.

Arden Yunger
Young Harris, Ga. / Blue Ridge Mountain EMC

Irish Spring or Dial



To keep deer from eating plants, I use Irish Spring or Dial soap. Both have a strong smell that deer don't like. I buy the soap in bulk and cut each bar into four parts. I put each piece of soap in a bag made of netting or an old pair of panty hose cut into 4-inch sections. I tie each bag with a twisty. I use another twisty to attach it to a stick and put it next to the flowers, bush or plant. It works!

Conrae Fortlage
Youngsville / Wake EMC

Beetles, newspaper, wheelbarrow

I have been gardening for many years. I was in the 4-H Club in Surry County and received a medal for gardening and a medal in entomology.

I controlled the pests in the garden with praying mantis and ladybug beetles. I didn't use sprays because the Sevin dust or spray would kill the "good" insects. To control weeds, we'd hoe the vegetables once at about six inches high and then we'd put layers of newspapers between the rows, with a few rocks or some soil on top. The newspapers would keep the moisture in and help to control the insects on the ground—they didn't like the newspapers!

With regards to growing tomatoes, having newspapers around the vines after staking keeps moisture in the soil. It keeps the fruit clean, and it keeps black widow spiders from hiding in a damp place.

I had a total knee replacement back in the summer, and another suggestion is to plant your seeds in a wheelbarrow or in flower pots. You can see how healthy and productive the cucumber plants were (at left). The squash did well in flower pots.

Enjoy the outdoors and have fun.

Betty Lou Wallace
Thurmond / Surry-Yadkin EMC

Used tea bags

Back in the summer we had an epidemic of locust-type grasshoppers. They were everywhere by the thousands eating everything, including my shrubs and rose bushes. I tried sprays and dusts—nothing seemed to help. I thought my bushes were dead. My sister told me to put used tea bags around them. They came back out, and the blooms were incredible. Best of all, the grasshoppers went away. Also, used coffee grounds seem to run moles and voles away. I don't know how it works, but it does.

Janice H. Sheffield
Ellerbe / Pee Dee EMC

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

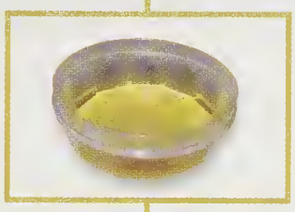
Thanks to everyone who sent in stories about controlling weeds and pests. You can see more on our Web site. Next month we'll publish your stories of the dumbest souvenir you ever brought home. (Deadline was Feb. 15.) For more themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series, see page 23.

Ladybugs

Every spring we have "The Great Ladybug Release." I order 900 ladybugs from an organic gardening catalog. They arrive in a cloth bag inside a small box. After spraying the garden and yard with water (the ladybugs are thirsty after the long journey) we sing "The Ladybug Picnic" and open the drawstring bag (shown right). The ladybugs fly off to eat aphids and other harmful insects. We see them in the garden all summer, doing their job!

Teresa Boykin
Boone / Blue Ridge EMC

Deadly beer



As an avid organic gardener, my mom was always looking for ways to rid her vegetable garden of pests without using chemicals. One year she was having a hard time with slugs. She learned that the best way to rid a garden of the slimy creatures was to place dishes of beer among the plants. The slugs would be attracted to the brew, crawl in and die.

Never being the type of person to be seen with any kind of alcohol, she was slightly worried about the prospect of being seen buying it. She figured she would slip into a local convenience store in our small town, purchase her beer and hurry out. Her plan was going smoothly until a friend and member of the church came into the store just as she was placing her single beer can purchase on the checkout counter.

My mom recounts with chagrin how she explained herself by stammering, "It's for my garden!"

The beer really did work, and her garden was slug-free.

Jennie Eggleston
Monroe / Union Power Cooperative

Keeping the pokeweed

Though we pull and poison such invasive weeds as poison ivy and greenbrier, the lowly pokeweed has found a place in our gardens. Its gently arching red stems and dark green foliage add interest to the borders of our yard. Pokeweed's white blossoms are attractive, just like the pendulous berry clusters that attract many birds. Robins and mockingbirds are especially attracted to the pokeweed berries.

We take precautions when handling the pokeweed since it contains toxins. The grandchildren know to leave it alone. The birds, however, are immune to the toxins.

Eve Deibel
Denver / EnergyUnited

Newspaper, but not chickens

As the time for gardening approaches I find myself wondering, is it all worth it? The garden seems to get bigger every year, and we (my husband, our 6-year-old daughter, our 2-year-old son and I) love the harvest. But the fight for the harvest is us against them—weeds, grass and the swarm of bugs that sets down on our farm every year. So a few years ago my husband and I used a method we had heard of before: newspaper.

Yes, your old newspaper spread under and around your plants will keep grass and weeds from growing, as long as you put down maybe four or five layers and cover it with old hay or pine straw or some other mulch. Wow!

Now for the swarm of leaf eaters. We have tried sprays and dusts. They work for a while but you have to keep applying them over the summer. The chickens on our farm love bugs, so I tried to put them out in the garden to try the natural way. In turn they pecked all the tomatoes, ate some of them, scratched up the lettuce and ate beans right off the vine. So much for organic. Liquid Sevin has been our best insect killer yet.

Beth Tyner
Hollister / Halifax EMC

Send us your best Earn $50

Here are the themes in our **"Nothing Could Be Finer"** series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you $50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

May 2007 How We Saved Energy
Good ideas for home, at work, or on the road.
Deadline: March 15

June 2007 One Time at Summer Camp Your best summer camp story. Send photos, if you have any.
Deadline: April 15

July 2007 Before Farmers Markets
Your stories of buying and selling farm products in the old days.
Deadline: May 15

August 2007 The Class Prank
What's the best one you ever heard?
Deadline: June 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay $50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
   Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
   Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

Roll up sleeves and pluck

Growing up on a farm in southeastern North Carolina certainly taught me to deal effectively with pests and weeds in the garden. My dad, Mr. Walter Lee Hill, was one of the finest farmers in the area. He took as much pride in the garden as he did the other crops. He had a surefire cure for pests and weeds in the garden, which I still use today.

We had to get in there and grub with our hands. Dad didn't believe much in using chemicals such as dusting unless absolutely necessary. At the first sight of any pest or the tiniest weed, we had to be right there to pluck them. They never took over our garden because Dad kept us in there almost daily purging them.

As I said, this method still works for me today. I keep the pests and weeds out of my garden by rolling up my sleeves and plucking away on an almost daily basis.

Wanda Hill Simmons
Havelock I Carteret-Craven EC

Reflective, hanging CDs

I found a great use for those pesky CDs that come in the mail to try and sell Internet services, but any CD or DVD will work.

Drive a stick at each end of your bean row or other vegetables that you want to protect from deer. Stretch a string between the sticks along the garden's edge so that it is about four feet off the ground. Stretch it tight. Then run another string through the hole on a CD, and hang it from the stretched string so that it hangs down about two to three feet above the vegetables. Hang several about three or four feet apart along the stretched string.

Even the slightest breeze will cause them to spin and wave. They catch the sunlight and reflect even light from the moon or security lights at night. I have used this idea for several years now after losing crop after crop of beans to the deer. I haven't had a deer problem since. Come to think of it, rabbits haven't bothered anything either! And it doesn't cost anything!

Edwina May
Boone I Blue Ridge Electric

Child labor

When I was growing up on the farm in the 30s and 40s, there were 12 children in our family. My mother believed in organic farming way back then. She would not allow my father to put any kind of poisoning on our farm. To get the children out of the house, she would get each of us a Mason jar with a lid and make us go out to pick potato bugs off the potato bushes. If any of us did not have many bugs, she assumed we did not pick them clean, so we had to go pick our rows over again.

When our cotton bushes began to have squares on them, she would make us get a peck bucket and go up one side of the hill of cotton and down the other side and pick up all the squares that had fallen off. These squares had boll weevils in them. We had to burn them. This helped make a better crop of cotton per acre. This is how we did organic farming.

Geranium Tew Lugo
Roseboro I South River EMC

Hand-picking, newspaper and Chlorox

I am 83 years old, and I enjoy working in my garden. I use a hoe and a push plow. When I was a child I always helped my mother with her garden. In 1936 and 1937 my mother had some nice collards. I would help her pick the bugs off her collards each day, and we would kill them by hand. She didn't have money to buy poison. She had collards that made a head like cabbage. Her garden was always free of weeds. We used a hoe, and in the spring my dad would plow the garden plot up with the mule. We had a fence around it to keep the chickens out, as they could be pests.

Now I can afford to buy poison for my garden.

In the fall, I put several layers of old wet newspapers on the area where I will plant my garden the next year. The weeds do not come up through them and later they rot and become fertilizer. I spray poison oak with Clorox.

I inherited a love of gardening from my mother, and I also learned to be frugal and to use what I have.

Monnie Sullivan
Lillington I South River EMC

The Good Guys Down Under

Beneficial Nematodes Control a Wide Range of Soil-borne Pests

By Katie Lamar Jackson

The word "nematode" can strike fear and loathing in the hearts of many a gardener or farmer, but there are actually some nematodes that should strike relief and admiration in plant lovers' hearts.

Nematodes are microscopic round worms that live in the soil and infect both plants and animals. Some nematode species infect plants, others infect insects and other animals. The plant-infecting ones, which harm many economically important crops such as tomatoes, cotton, lawn grasses and other agronomic and horticultural plants, are the bad guys of the garden soil. But other beneficial nematode species that attack insects are the good guys because they can be used to protect plants.

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Beneficial nematodes can be purchased to treat small garden and landscape areas, and can be used against some 250 soil-related insect pests such as cockroaches, fleas, weevils, grubs, ants, cutworms, armyworms, bagworms, many damaging moths, fruit flies, Colorado potato and Japanese beetles, fungus gnats, mole crickets, subterranean termites, tobacco bud and cutworms, and a variety of tree and vine borers. In fact, almost any insect pest that spends part of its life in the soil can be controlled with beneficial nematodes.

What's more, unlike some chemical pest controls, nematodes do not harm beneficial insects (such as ladybugs), humans and other warm-blooded animals, worms, birds, plants or the environment in general. In fact, because nematodes occur naturally in the environment and don't harm people, other animals or the environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has exempted beneficial nematodes from pesticide registration.

Here's how the insect-fighting nematodes work. These nematodes enter an insect host through the insect's body openings or by boring through its body wall. Once inside the insect, the nematode releases a bacterium that kills the host within 48 hours. Meanwhile, and after the demise of the host, the nematode feeds off the host's body and reproduces within the body cavity, bringing into the world more pest-fighting nematodes to populate the soil.

While many pest-fighting nematodes exist naturally in soils, you may need to increase the number of nematodes in your soil or introduce a pest-specific nematode to fight your exact insect problem. Luckily, you can buy them through the Internet, by mail-order and sometimes in local garden stores. They come nicely packaged in a concentrated form, which makes it easy for you to apply them, usually with a sprayer or through a hose nozzle.

Though nematodes are handy little helpers and their commercial availability makes using them quite easy, they are not fool-proof. Make sure you get a nematode treatment that specifically controls your pest, which means you must properly identify the pest before buying beneficial nematode treatments. Your local Cooperative Extension system office should be able to help you identify the pest and the proper nematode treatment.

Try to use purchased nematode treatments as soon after purchase as possible, or refrigerate them if you can't use them immediately. But don't freeze them!

Irrigate the application site before and after you apply nematodes, and try to apply them at early morning or early evening when the soil temperature is between 55 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

By following these basic rules and making sure you follow the label instructions for use and application, you too can enlist the help of the good guys down under.

Katie Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and Auburn University College of Agriculture, with more than 25 years of experience reporting on science, agriculture and the environment.

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Garden Gates

Make the entrance to your garden a piece of landscape art

By Katie Lamar Jackson

All photos by Shutterstock

A garden gate may provide a line of view into a garden or serve as a transition between outdoor "rooms," and it can be the focal point of your garden or landscape.

Gates have always been a big part—sometimes a bedeviling part—of my life. When I was a child, I learned to open and close those wobbly post-and-wire Texas gaps from horseback. I discovered that a little bump of the hip and a just-so lift would open those sagging metal gates on my grandfathers' farms wide enough to let the pickup truck through. And it was ingrained in me from an early age to make sure each gate was latched behind me to keep the dogs, horses or cattle that populated our lives and lands from escaping.

These days, however, the only gate I deal with is a fuss-free chain-link one that leads to the pen of our three-legged dog, Oscar. We learned the hard way that, despite his disability, Oscar is swift-footed and prone to dashing through an open gate, so I am thankful that it's an easy gate to manage. But I have been dreaming this winter of another kind of gate, one to welcome the world rather than keep something in or out—a garden gate.

Now gates, by nature, are supposed to be utilitarian. They were developed, according to historians, at the same time

continued on pg. 27

that humans began to erect walls for protection (no big surprise there, eh?), so gates originated as tools that controlled access or shut out the world.

While a garden gate may serve the very same functions—an outdoor doorway that provides access to the garden while also keeping out the riff-raff—it has the lovely advantage of also being an element of art in a landscape and has potential to be ever-so welcoming. A garden gate may provide a line of view into a garden or serve as a transition between outdoor "rooms," and it can be the focal point of your garden or landscape. It can be as simple or as complicated as you want, ranging from two sentinel posts with no real gate, to close to a trellis, to a roofed pergola and a bench for relaxing.

In researching my dream gate plan, the first thing I learned was that a garden gate needs to be functional as well as beautiful. If you are thinking of a gate for your own garden space, ask yourself the following questions. Does the gate need to keep animals—four-legged, three-legged or even two-legged—in or out? Does it need to be lockable to keep little two-legged critters from trespassing or escaping? Or, is its function more art than utility? Could it simply be an open arbor that defines an entryway, or does it need to provide a screen of privacy for your garden space? Does it need to match an existing fence or landscape design? And are there neighborhood rules and regulations that may dictate your gate style choices?

Answering these questions in advance allows you to choose a gate style that is appropriate for your needs. Once you have an idea of the use and style of gate you want, it's time to get into the details. One good idea I ran up on in my research is to take pictures of the garden or landscape from all sides and angles, including views from the house where the gate might be visible. My source suggests that black and white photos are better than color photos because black and white helps spot assets and flaws in the location or landscape design without the distraction of color.

Once you have picked the perfect spot of the gate, sketch a picture of your dream gate adding any details you may want to include, such as whimsical touches of lattice, stained glass, woodwork, metal embellishments or paint. And think about what you want to plant around the gate, such as climbing roses or other vines or shrubs that will compliment the design. If you're drawing impaired, collect photos of garden gates from magazines and books and use those as your blueprints.

Garden gates can be made of almost anything, from bamboo to metal, wood to PVC or chicken wire (though it may take a special creative flair to make the chicken wire and PVC aesthetically pleasing) to simply an airy entryway with side posts but no real gate at all.

Some people use recycled materials or pieces of old barn wood for their gates, or reuse antique wood or metal gates that they found at yard sales or antique and junk stores. Others have wood or metal artists design and create one-of-a-kind gates. Still others take the do-it-yourself route and build their own using pre-packaged garden gate plans or their own design-build talents. The options are limited only by your budget, talents and style needs.

The technical aspects

A garden gate should be at least three feet wide, and up to four feet in width. If you want a wider gate space, consider putting in a double-sided gate and definitely plan to provide extra support from the gate posts.

Gate posts should be sturdy, straight and plumb and should be sunk at least two feet into the ground—three feet for wider or heavier gates—and perhaps even reinforced with concrete footings. Make sure you use treated lumber if you are using wooden posts so they won't rot or be taken out by termites.

An abundance of gate building plans exist, so look for them in bookstores, garden centers, through your local Extension System office and on the Web. And plan to buy all your gate building supplies at one time so you won't be running back and forth to the store too often. This will also ensure that you have matched the hardware (hinges and latches) to the design and support needs of your gate.

Katie Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and Auburn University College of Agriculture, with more than 25 years of experience reporting on science, agriculture and the environment.

When Good Critters Go Bad

How to Garden with Wildlife

By Katie Lamar Jackson

It's nearly impossible to garden without experiencing at least some negative interactions with wildlife. The key to keeping your sanity while still nurturing wild things is to manage those human-animal interactions safely and humanely.

The first thing to remember is that most wildlife problems are relatively benign, says Jim Armstrong, a professor of wildlife sciences at Auburn University who specializes in human-wildlife interactions and wildlife damage issues. Armstrong notes that unless we encounter a sick or venomous creature, most wild animals that impact gardens are not dangerous; they are simply doing what comes naturally.

"They're just trying to make a living and we are helping them, whether we mean to or not," he said.

Gardens and landscapes attract wildlife because they offer easy sources of food and shelter. For that reason, Armstrong suggests putting a little space between the domestic and the wild worlds by developing a wildlife buffer strip around the home and garden. Position wildlife feeding areas and habitat structures (brush piles, bird and bat houses, etc.) as well as compost piles as far away from the house and garden as possible. And don't leave enticements, such as pet food or loose garbage, on or near the doorstop.

Also, lower the taste factor of your landscape. Numerous plants are available that are unattractive or downright unpalatable to wildlife, such as some pungent herbs, bitter-tasting shrubs and trees and even some herbaceous plants such as calendulas, irises, marigolds and fleabane.

The next choices are to repel, exclude or remove nuisance wildlife. Repellents can be chemical or mechanical in nature, ranging from smelly substances or yucky tastes to loud noises or bright lights. Chemical repellents typically have an offensive smell or taste to wildlife. Some may smell like garlic, rotten eggs, soap and ammonia while others may carry the scent of humans or predatory animals. Still others may be hot or bitter agents that can be sprinkled or sprayed on foliage and fruits to make them less tasty. These repellents are usually nontoxic (to animals, humans and pets) and can be applied directly to plants or around the perimeter of a garden area. A variety of such products are available commercially from garden stores and mail-order sources, and there are also home recipes available to make your own repellents.

Chemical repellents may not work on all species of garden pest animals, and topical repellents usually must be reapplied after a rain or periodically refreshed when the smell or taste fades.

Another option is to use loud or unexpected sounds, mild shocks, sudden spurts of water or flashing, bright lights, all of which can be rigged to motion detectors or timers.

Old-fashioned, low-tech options include scarecrows, tying up flapping pie plates or placing models of predators (such as snakes and owls) in the garden to scare off any nibblers. Tenacious wild animals may eventually lose their fear of these items, so you may have to come up with a steady supply of scary ideas to keep them away.

The most fool-proof repellent of all may be a four-legged security guard—a noisy, preferably large dog that patrols the garden area for at least part of the day. In fact, a dog may also help protect your garden against a domestic garden pest, the neighborhood cat that uses your garden as rest stop.

Excluding wildlife means erecting a barrier, such as a fence or underground blockade, around your garden. The height and design of a fence depends on what kind of animal you're trying to keep out—it needs to be some seven feet high for deer, for example, but only knee high for rabbits and smaller mammals. Electric fences or fences made by stringing cloth tape in a staggered design that visually disorients deer may be better options.

To exclude burrowing animals, such as groundhogs and moles, sink a metal or wire barrier deep enough in the soil to keep whatever pest is present from burrowing under the barrier—at least a foot or more deep to be safe. Netting also helps keep birds and some other animals from eating plants or ripening fruit. Exclusion devices can be rather expensive to install, but once they are in place they should be relatively low-maintenance.

The option of last resort is to actually remove animal pests from your space. Killing wildlife is usually illegal and almost always unnecessary. But trapping and relocating them is often allowed. Check with your local animal shelter or wildlife experts to find out how to trap and relocate them safely.

Help is available through most state Cooperative Extension agencies or other land-grant university resources and through some federal agencies, such as the Wildlife Services program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Katie Jackson is a writer, editor and photographer for the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station and Auburn University College of Agriculture, with more than 25 years of experience reporting on science, agriculture and the environment.

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National collie show comes to Concord

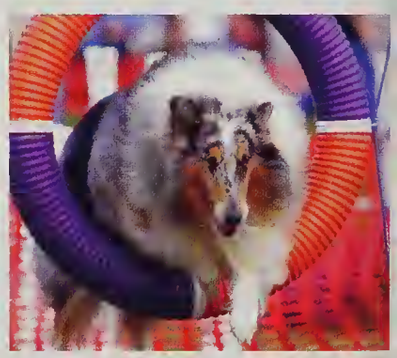
First fan photo of Lassie, 1943.

This month, North Carolinians can learn more about the dog breed that brought us everyone's favorite—Lassie. The Collie Club of America (CCA) and its N.C.-based Piedmont Collie Club will host the National Collie Conformation Show and Performance Trials in Concord on March 25–31.

When dog trainer Rudd Weatherwax took Pal, a collie he had rescued, to tryouts for the 1943 film "Lassie Come Home," MGM studio employees were less than impressed with Pal's appearance. Attitudes quickly changed when Pal performed as a stand-in for the studio's original collie choice. Weatherwax directed Pal to jump into a flooded river, swim to the other side, drag himself onto shore, and collapse as though he were at death's door. This feat prompted the film's director to exclaim: "Pal may have gone into the water, but Lassie came out!"

Weatherwax went on to breed, select and train seven direct descendants of Pal, all of whom succeeded each other in films and on TV. Bob, Rudd's son, continues the legacy, breeding, selecting and training eighth and ninth generation descendants of the original MGM Lassie. Bob Rudd and his current Pal descendant, Laddie, will be special guests at the Collie Club show in Concord.

At the show, the collie's versatility will be on display when an estimated 1,200 entrants compete in a range of venues. Collies will compete in herding, agility, obedience and conformation.



Collies come in the traditional sable color, as well as tri-color, blue merle and white. The long-coated rough variety is complimented by the short-coated smooth variety.

This annual AKC-sanctioned event rotates to various states around the country. The CCA divides the United States into six zones, each containing a number of states whose local collie clubs bid to host the show.

The Collie Club of America formed in 1886 to promote and protect purebred collies and encourage their registration with the AKC. The club boasts 2,000-plus members. The CCA encourages the improvement of the collie as loving companions, working dogs and AKC competition dogs.

This year's local show host, the Piedmont Collie Club based in Asheboro, became AKC sanctioned and incorporated in 1994. The Piedmont Collie Club promotes responsible pet ownership, breeding programs, obedience, agility, herding and conformation. In 2000, the club started Collie Rescue of the Carolinas, operated by Jean Smith of Winston-Salem. Collie Rescue will participate at the show with a parade of rescue collies and their owners.

The national collie show will be held at the Cabarrus Arena & Events Center on Highway 49 in Concord, March 25–31.

For more information

Cabarrus Convention & Visitors Bureau: (800) 848-3740
www.visitcabarrus.com

Collie Club of America: www.collieclubofamerica.org

Denton turns 100

By Ashley-Harrington Andrews

Parade in downtown Denton during its 50th anniversary celebration in 1957.

The mayor of Denton in the midst of the Great Depression, Howell E. Harrison, described his town as "too tough to die." He was right. This year Denton marks its 100th year of incorporation, and judging from how Denton celebrated in 1957, there will be plenty going on.

Another Harrison, Branson Ivey Harrison, is generally considered the primemover of Denton. In 1877 he evidently declared that this place in southern Davidson County, then known as Finch's Cross Roads, needed its own post office instead of relying on occasional mail delivery from Thomasville. He applied to the U.S. and offered several town names that were rejected. One day he was talking to a young man, Samuel Moses Peacock, who had a reputation as a great reader. "Mose" was reading a book that mentioned a Texas town named Denton, which struck them both as a nice name. Harrison tried that, the U.S. accepted it, Denton got a post office in 1878, and "Mose" was named postmaster.

B.I. Harrison, a school teacher at the time, then partnered with J.M. Daniel to open the town's first store in 1882 and later moved the post office into it and became postmaster himself. The general store at the crossroads where the Denton Tire and Appliance Store is today was known for its stock which included sugar, coffee, salt fish, lamp oil, horseshoes, plow points, sheepskins, opossum hides, furs, dried fruits, roots and special herbs. In 1893, Harrison's partnership dissolved, and he moved the post office into his house, which stood where today's post office stands. His wife helped behind the counter, because Harrison himself was busy. He was also in the nursery stock business and happened to employ as a salesman in Cleveland County a young man named Clyde R. Hoey, the future governor and U.S. senator.

Bert Lanier, a Denton merchant and ardent local researcher, managed to find out that the place known as Finch's Cross Roads got its name from a Richardson Finch who in 1819 bought some 500 acres on what is known as Red Hill, up the hill from today's junction of Salisbury St. and Main St.

(On the subject of Laniers, Denton was the hometown of two fairly well-known Major League Baseball players: pitcher Max Lanier who played with the St. Louis Cardinals in the 1940s, and Hal Lanier who was an infielder, coach and manager in the 1960s.)

In 1886 Denton saw its first grist mill and school. Three years later the Denton Baptist Church was built replacing the Old Tom's Creek church. Dr. Abel Anderson was Denton's first doctor and practiced more than 40 years.

It wasn't until the railroad came to Denton in 1904 that things picked up. The region's hardwood forests supplied the raw materials for railroad ties, which Denton produced in profusion. So it seemed like a good time to incorporate as a town. The state legislature accepted Denton's appeal for incorporation in March 1907. Branson Ivey Harrison, of course, was named to the town's first governing board.

In 1912 the Denton Chair Company opened, followed by other wood-related industries. Evidently just about everything shut down after World War I. Even the railroad went bankrupt. But soon business reappeared. In the 1930s, Rodgers Hosiery Mill opened up, then Thornton Knitting Company, two roller mills, broom manufacturers, a lumber plant, ice and bottling plant, marble cutting business, cotton gin, and in 1966 Burlington Industries built a textile mill known as Klopman Mills. Klopman Mills became today's Burlington Fabrics, the largest employer in the area.

Denton claims some 1,400 residents today and a busy downtown commercial district. Denton is near the popular High Rock Lake with more than 300 miles of shoreline. Denton Farm Park is a unique 100-acre park that hosts the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion the first week in July, an antique railroad and restored village buildings, bluegrass festivals, the Tour de Kale fundraiser and other events.

Centennial Celebration Events

On March 11 the town of Denton will be celebrating its 100th birthday. Denton is providing commemorative centennial calendars that can be purchased for $5 at Denton Town Hall located on Salisbury Street. Centennial car tags are also available for $2. For more information, call the centennial coordinator at (336) 859-4269 or town hall at (336) 859-4231 or visit www.denton-nc.us.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives support UNC's Burn Center

By Charles Martin

Permanent scars often cover large portions of burn victims' bodies and serve as their badge of courage. Their disfigurements reveal a horrifying and unimaginable brush with death.

Though burn injury victims exhibit enormous strength, they are vulnerable to people who might stare in curiosity. "It is the most painful, debilitating and embarrassing thing you can ever go through," said Leslie Ann Smith who has overcome the adversity of both homelessness and burn injuries. Smith is not only a burn survivor; today she delivers medical care to patients of her own as a physician. "I never thought twice about becoming a doctor, and really thought I was qualified to make a difference because of what I had gone through."

Staff from the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center help patient Jim Edwards test his range of motion. Edwards was burned in a plant explosion in Kinston in 2003.

Smith was enrolled in college and on the dean's list back in 1979 until she suffered a mental breakdown—she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital. There she spotted matches on a dayroom table left by a forgetful staff member. In a hopeless state, she snatched the matches and set herself on fire. After spending three months under the care of the North Carolina Jaycee Burn Center, part of UNC Healthcare in Chapel Hill, she was discharged with no place to go but the streets. Smith lived on the streets for months until she found a nun who offered her the hope she needed. Another blessing came her way when the chief of molecular genetics at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) offered her an unpaid job as a lab technician. She later won a full scholarship to Duke University where she graduated in biochemistry, then pursued medical school at East Carolina and her residency at the University of Louisville.

Scott Carlson is a burn survivor, too, and like Smith, believes "you learn to take the good with the bad." Carlson committed the worst act of an electrical engineer one evening when he relied solely on the word of a co-worker and neglected to re-check the equipment he was working on to make sure it was not energized. As he began re-routing wire on the unit at a work site, he accidentally dropped a live wire in nearby water. When he saw sparks, he knew there and then that he was in danger. The explosion knocked him unconscious.

Seven weeks later he found himself at the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center. He suffered second and third degree burns to parts of his upper torso, arms, face and hands. "There's more to it than just scars though," said Carlson. "I have my life."

Learn not to burn

The 21-bed burn center is considered one of the best in the world, providing a combination of medical care and rehabilitative services to burn injury victims—both children and adults. Though the NIH supports the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center budget through UNC Healthcare, corporate giving provides substantial revenue for other programs.

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives finance 100 percent of the burn center's fire education program for school-age children. The "Learn Not to Burn" program teaches fire safety and prevention to more than 85,000 preschool and elementary students. This year, electric cooperatives and their supporters generated about $85,000. Since 1998, the cooperatives have given more than $500,000 to the fire education program.

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"This program is truly about the kids," said Dale Lambert, EVP of Randolph EMC, Asheboro, and fundraising chair. Lambert said that "when fires do occur children have to know how to respond."

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives began their relationship with the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center in the latter 1970s when a Goldsboro electrical contractor and co-op subcontractor set out to improve the accessibility of burn care in the state. John Stackhouse made an initial investment of $40,000 for the construction of the burn center; the board of the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives matched that amount—other donors followed and the burn center expanded to deliver quality patient care, research, education and public service.

Lambert says that "Given the nature of our business, we have lineman who could one day require treatment at the hospital, so our connection and understanding of its value is going to always be there."

Charles Martin is a senior communications specialist with the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives.

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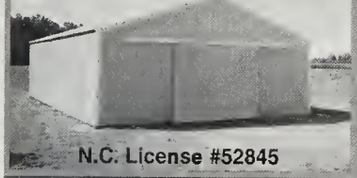

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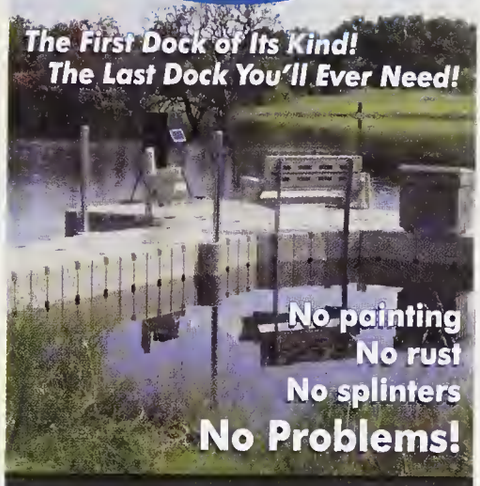

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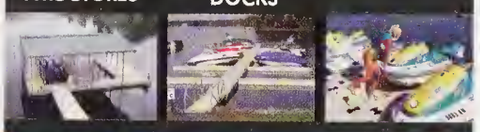

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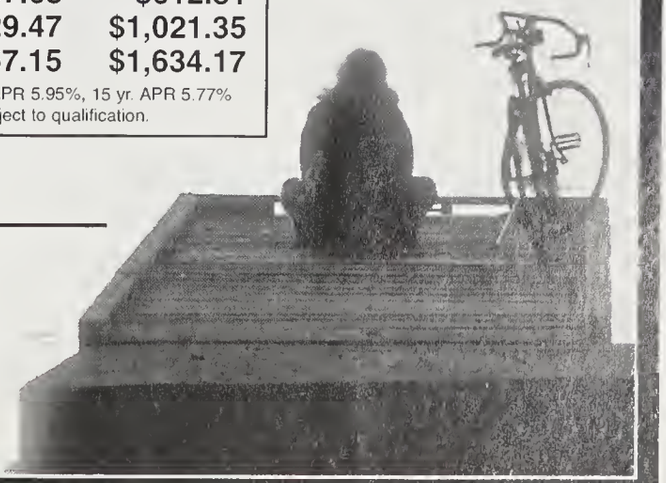

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From Rebecca Liles, Elizabethtown

From Rebecca Liles, Elizabethtown

... Your mama threatens to "knock you slam out."

... When introducing a family member to a friend you say, "This here is my cousin."

... You came across Bib Mama's fried-meat-grease can under the kitchen sink.

... Someone says your child had a "pure-T fit" at the store.

... Your granddaddy smokes cigarettes while he's on an oxygen tank.

From T.J. Nelon, Mill Spring

... You have a coffee can of bent nails in the basement to be straightened out one day.

... Your daughter carries her pet chickens for a ride on the handlebars of her bike.

... You sit on the front porch in the evening watching those "two lights" appear on the mountain.

... Your dog is so old he didn't notice that a strange dog came on the porch and laid down beside him during a rainstorm.

... A stretched possum hide is part of your home decor.

From Bill Taylor, formerly of Chocowinity

... You know that a Bill's Hot Dog can be found only in little Washington.

From Tommy & Kay Rice

... You know it is serious if they "carry 'em to Dukes."

... You apply for a loan to purchase a mobile home and have no job, down payment or credit.

... You know what a fifth middle is.

... Your grandfather laid his hair down with lard from a stand.

... You know what "riding on his truck" means.

... You have been in a dirt clog fight.

... You have been pikin'.

... You have been burned and had the fire talked out.

... Someone blows smoke in your ears to get the gnats out.

... You take scraps out.

... You burn snakes to see if their legs come out.

... You had a B/C Powder and Coke at the station for breakfast.

... You know what a crazy check is.

... You believe that Billy Graham is the only TV preacher you can trust.

From Phyllis Fennell, Murfreesboro

... The ambulance is known as the meat wagon.

... You drink merk instead of milk.

... You use an old tire for a flower pot and a swing.

... Your best shoes are your goodims.

From the Phillips family, Zebulon

... On your first date you go to a turkey shoot.

... You can't wait to go to Grandma's to eat chicken and dumplin's and blackberry cobbler.

... You ask for sweet milk in a restaurant.

From David Harrell, Eure

... You have to crawl under the house to catch a headless chicken because it's lunch.

... You can't go on vacation until the peanut patch is chopped.

... You use an AM radio to relax the cows to get them to give more milk.

... You're expected to keep A's in school even though you missed so many days during planting and harvest.

... When someone asks your dad why all four boys were born in January, he says, "April was planting time."

From Alice Carter, Lexington

... You eat mayonnaise on just about everything.

... You see a lady driving a tractor or combine.

... When you visit someone, you gather in the kitchen around the table to talk.

... When outside you get red bugs on you.

... Going "out of state" on vacation means going to Myrtle Beach.

From Teresa Erby, Rockingham

... You use sewing thread for dental floss.

... You use broom straw for toothpicks.

... You have taken a bath in the Pee Dee River.

... You have at least one hooptee car or truck.

... You shop for Christmas gifts at the flea market on Highway 220.

From Joel Jessup, Siler City

... You add a room onto the house because you run out of walls to hang deer horns.

... You park your old M Farmall on the hill so you can roll it off and crank it, because it has a magneto and you don't want to buy a battery for it.

... You eat the top tier of your wedding cake before your first anniversary because you need freezer space for more deer meat.

... You give all your young'ns a "tick finder" hair cut with horse clippers in the summer time.

... You take your own bottle of Texas Pete hot sauce to a restaurant in your pocket because they have only Tabasco.

... You have a solar shower on top of your horse trailer made from a beer keg.

From Scot Caldwell, Dallas

... You make a kite out of newspaper and two pine tree sticks.

... You skip church on Sunday because you are getting the ox out of the ditch.

... You see cows and horses along both sides of I-40 and Highway 321.

... Your idea of eating out is sitting down by the creek and listening to the dogs run at night.

... You know where Shady Rest and Cat Square are.

... You will vote for Dean or Roy for President in 2008. (Go Heels.)

From Bobbie Jo Allen, Lexington

... Your children live over the hill and through the woods to Grandma's house.

... Your family, both sets of grandparents and great-granny all live on the same big hunk of land which PaPaw swears you better never sell because "ya ain't never gonna find another piece a land like it."

... On summer days you wait for Grandma to get done runnin' the summer school bus route so we can all come over and eat watermelon (fresh from Papaw's garden) and homemade ice cream.

... You can count on at least one phone call during the winter saying, "Don't turn your water on for a couple hours 'cause PaPaw's workin' on the well in the pump house."

... When you go to PaPaw Bob's for breakfast your kids have to pick all his ripe strawberries before they go in and climb on the John Deere.

... You're driving to town and you're behind a tractor or a pick-up that has a bumper sticker that reads: "Tobacco bought this truck."

From Sheila Elliott, Bunnlevel

... Your Grandma Alean Elliott when praying would say, "Lord ham mercy."

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REPORT SICK BIRDS
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USDA **United States Department of Agriculture**
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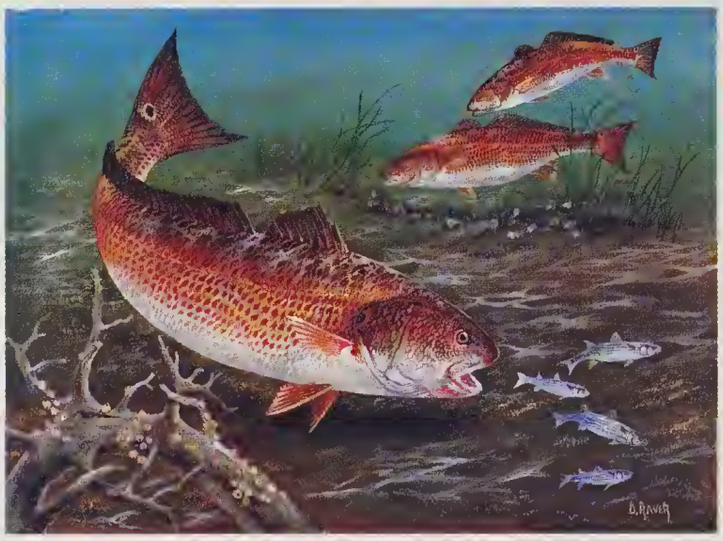


Art print for new coastal fishing license

The North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission is selling commemorative prints by North Carolina painter Duane Raver Jr. to raise awareness of the state's first Coastal Recreational Fishing License. Any person 16 and older who fishes recreationally in any water designated as coastal and joint waters of North Carolina must purchase a Coastal Recreational Fishing License (CRFL), effective Jan. 1, 2007. The new license is available from Wildlife Resources Commission license agents (including tackle shops and other retailers) and any Division of Marine Fisheries office. Annual licenses for state residents 16 or older are $15, while non-residents 16 or older pay $30. Raver's artwork has been on more than 200 cover illustrations of Wildlife in North Carolina, the commission's monthly publication. The commemorative print shows the state's saltwater fish, the red drum. Prints are 12 by 14 inches. Prices vary: One Duane Raver print, series of 3,000 signed and numbered, $50; one Duane Raver proof, series of 150 signed and numbered, $150; and one Duane Raver proof, Remarque signed, $180.

(800) 682-2632
www.ncdmfstore.net

Hyde County tote bags

Hyde County tote bags feature two of the county's historic landmarks, the Ocracoke Lighthouse and Mattamuskeet Lodge, interwoven in an attractive tapestry. The bags have a black cotton reverse and handles, and measure 16-by-16-by-4 inches. The Ocracoke Lighthouse, built in 1823, stands 75 feet tall and is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse in the state. Mattamuskeet Lodge was completed in 1915 as the world's largest pumping plant and was later converted to a rustic hunting lodge. The bags are $20, plus $3 for first-class postage/handling. Send check or money order to the Hyde County Chamber, P.O. Box 178, Swan Quarter, NC, 27885. A free visitors guide is also available for the area. You can order "Hyde County...The Road Less Traveled" on the chamber's Web site or by calling the phone number below.

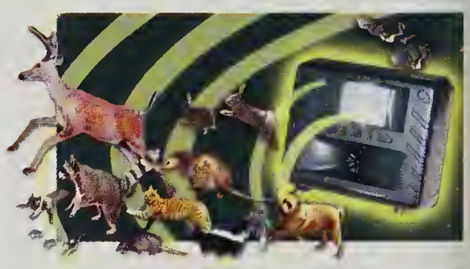
(888) 493-3826
www.hydecounty.org

Vermont Treasures

A new store in downtown Southern Pines brings a taste of New England to North Carolina. Vermont Treasures sells an array of items in gift baskets from Vermont, including Green Mountain coffee, Keurig coffeemakers, King Arthur baking goods, Vermont cheese, syrups, Simon Pearce glassware and green marble. Visitors to the showroom can sip a free cup of hot coffee and sample Vermont cheese and browse "theme" rooms, such as the King Arthur section. Vermont Treasures is located on the corner of South Broad St. and West Illinois Ave., and is open 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday. It is owned and operated by Robert and June Vetter of Whispering Pines. Gift baskets, which range from $25 to $200, can be ordered by phone for pick-up later. As press time, it wasn't possible to place orders on the store's Web site for shipping.

(910) 246-3400
www.vermonttreasures.org

YardGard



YardGard repeller is an electronic control device that keeps dogs, cats, deer, raccoons, skunks and other pesky critters away from property safely with ultrasonic waves. It protects up to 4,000 square feet from pest animal damage in yards, gardens, porches and greenhouses. Other sites where it may be needed include walkways, warehouses and dumpsters. The portable one-pound unit can be installed with keyhole slot mounts. The deep-green colored unit measures 6¾-by-5¼-by-3½ inches to fit inconspicuously on property. Owners can choose continuous operation, or motion-sensor operation to activate only when pests move into the coverage zone. The sonic and ultrasonic sound frequency (15 kHz–25 kHz) is adjustable, depending on the pest. This weatherproof unit features a snap-on rain cover to protect controls. Dual-operation unit plugs into AC or uses 4 'C' batteries. YardGard sells for $125. It is sold through Bird-x, based in Chicago, which sells a variety of animal and bird repellants.

(800) 662-5021
www.bird-x.com

Carolina Country Store features interesting, useful products, services, travel sites, handicrafts, food, books, CDs and DVDs that relate to North Carolina. To submit an item for possible publication, e-mail editor@carolinacountry.com with a description and clear, color pictures. Or you can submit by mail: Attention: Store, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC, 27616. Those who submit must be able to handle large orders.

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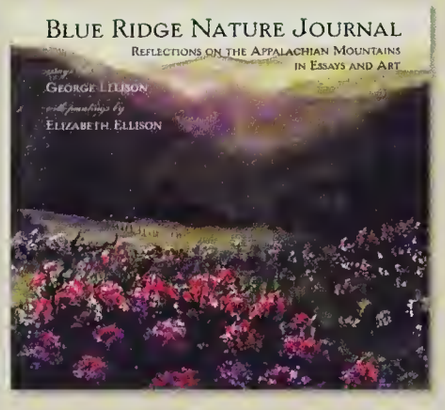
bookshelf

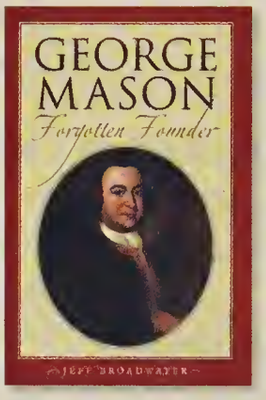
"Blue Ridge Nature Journal"


BLUE RIDGE NATURE JOURNAL
REFLECTIONS ON THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS IN ESSAYS AND ART
GEORGE ELLISON
ELIZABETH ELLISON

This journey through the heart of the Appalachian Mountains features first-person essays and full-color paintings that illuminate the region's natural history. From the tiny white-throated sparrow to the Nantahala Gorge, author George Ellison and illustrator Elizabeth Ellison explore the area's wonders. Gathered in two sections, Flora and Fauna, George's observations offer insight into the region's geological origins, plants, animals and related Cherokee and settler lore. Elizabeth's watercolors, collages and line drawings offer a visual trip. The book includes topics such as the natural origins of the great Mythic Hawk and Mythic Serpent of the Cherokees, the demise of the timber wolf and the spotted skunk, as well as how early settlers made beehives and rabbits traps. "Blue Ridge Nature Journal: Reflections on the Appalachian Mountains in Essays and Art" is published by Natural History Press in Charleston, S.C. Softcover, 144 pages, $34.99.

(866) 223-5778
www.historypress.net

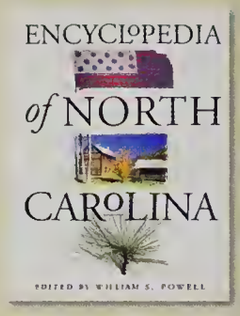
"George Mason, Forgotten Founder"



Before the American Revolution, Mason was a mentor to George Washington. Thomas Jefferson said he was "of the first order of greatness." As a delegate to the U.S. Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, Mason proposed a bill of rights based on the Virginia Declaration of Right, which he wrote for the state's first constitution. When the final draft of the U.S. constitution did not contain a bill of rights, Mason refused to sign it because he believed it offered too little protection for the interests of Southern states. The Bill of Rights later introduced in the first Congress was essentially his work. In "George Mason, Forgotten Founder," author Jeff Broadwater covers this and much more about the public career of the man often remembered as the "Father of the Bill of Rights," with a broad-ranging look at Revolutionary America, the early American South and events at Mason's plantation. Published by The University of North Carolina Press. Hardcover, 352 pages, $34.95.

(800) 848-6224
http://uncpress.unc.edu

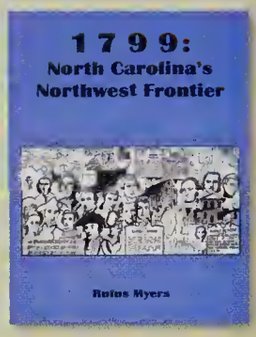
"Encyclopedia of North Carolina"



Edited by historian William Powell, this single comprehensive volume provides more than 2,000 entries, including topics such as discovery, exploration and settlement, industry, transportation, education, the judiciary, religion, agriculture, fine and folk art, the natural environment, language, customs, manners and folklore. More than 550 people, ranging from writers to professors to amateur historians, contributed to the book. Authors of each article are identified in the compendium, which includes more than 400 photos and maps. Published by The University of North Carolina Press in association with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library. Hardcover, 1,360 pages, $65.

(800) 848-6224
http://uncpress.unc.edu

"1799: North Carolina's Northwest Frontier"

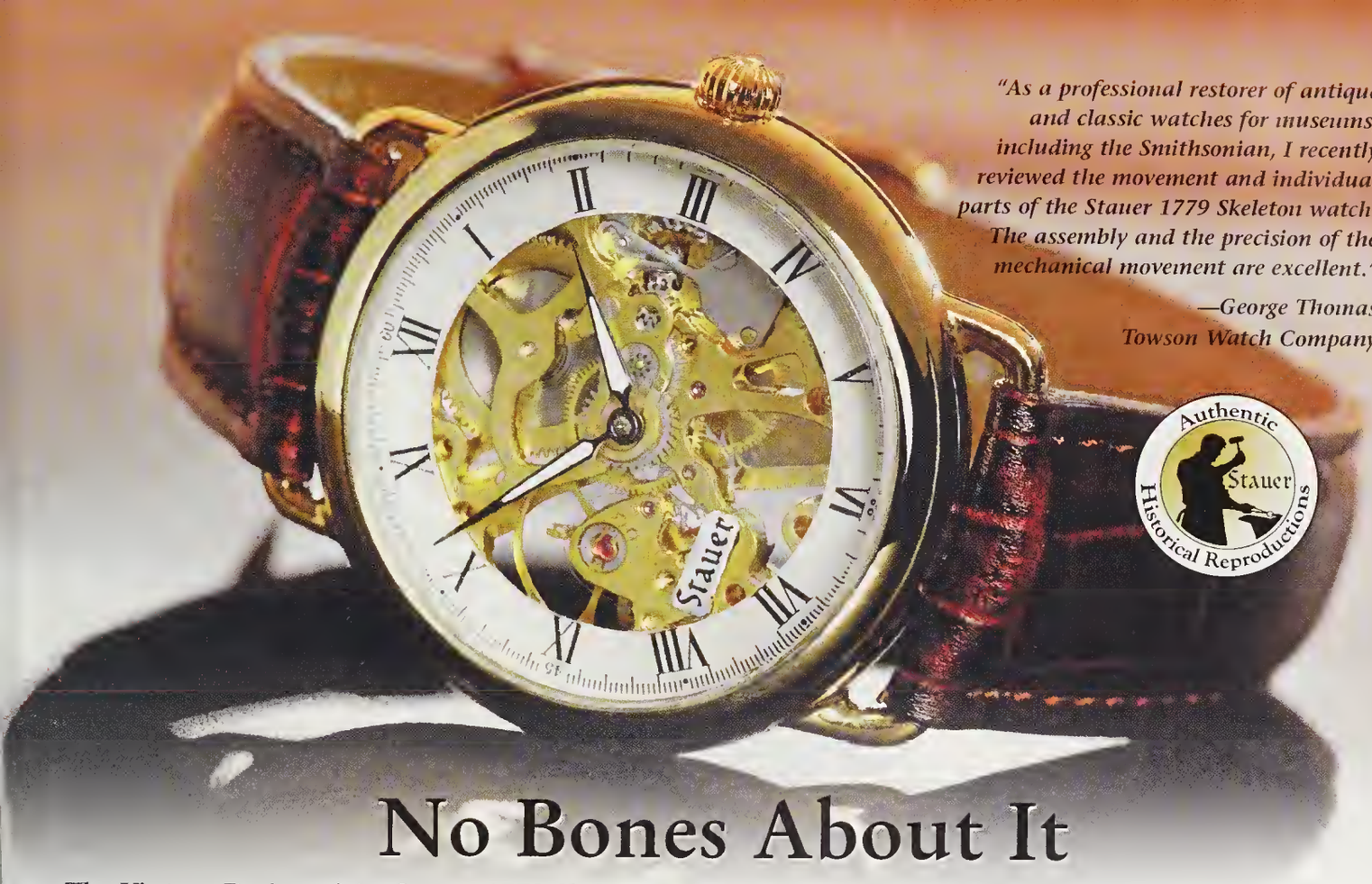


Who was Madoc the Welch Prince? Was there a Welch town called Freydeck on the New River in old Ashe County territory? This detailed book looks at events, politics and pioneer culture of the 18th century, with particular focus on Ashe and Wilkes counties. Its 28 chapters include topics such as "The Old Buffalo Trail," "The Battle of Point Pleasant," "The Operations of Fort Defiance," "The Indian Nations in 1796," "William Blount's Secret Plan," "The Louisiana Purchase," "The London Riots of 1780," "Dual Government in Franklin," and "Everyday Life for the Watagua Settlers." The author, Blue Ridge EMC member Rufus Myers, drew most of the illustrations, provided maps, and published the book. Softcover, 244 pages. $25 plus $5 shipping. To purchase, send a check or money order to Rufus Myers-1799, P.O. Box 232, West Jefferson, NC, 28694.

"Murder At Blue Falls"

Jemma Chase believes she'll find peace leading trail rides and doing carpentry on her parents' Appalachian dude ranch in the Triplett Valley. However, a series of minor crimes escalates to arson and murder, and Jemma's diversion as an amateur sleuth puts her in danger. Meanwhile, Detective Tucker's suspicions annoy her, but he becomes a lifesaver. Maggie Bishop, who lives near Boone and is served by Blue Ridge Electric, wrote "Murder at Blue Falls." Part of the Appalachian Adventure Mystery series, it's published by Ingalls Publishing Group, Inc. in Boone. Softcover, 192 pages, $12.

(800) 462-6420
custserve@nbnbooks.com



"As a professional restorer of antique and classic watches for museums, including the Smithsonian, I recently reviewed the movement and individual parts of the Stauer 1779 Skeleton watch. The assembly and the precision of the mechanical movement are excellent."

—George Thomas
Towson Watch Company

No Bones About It

The Vintage Design of the Stauer 1779 Skeleton Reveals the Precision Inner Workings of a Great Machine.

We found our most interesting watch in our oldest history book. A trip to an antique book store led us to find one of the earliest designs of the sought after skeleton timepiece. With a 227-year-old design, Stauer has brought back the past in the intriguing old world geometry of the Stauer 1779 Skeleton. See right through to the precision parts and hand assembled movement and into the heart of the unique timepiece. It's like seeing an X-Ray inside the handsome gold filled case.

The open exhibition back allows you to further explore the intricate movement and fine craftsmanship.

Beauty is only skin deep but the Engineering Goes Right to the Bone. Intelligent Collectors of vintage mechanical watches have grown bored with mass produced quartz movements. Like fine antique car collectors, they look for authenticity, but they also want practicality from their tiny machines. Inspired by a rare museum piece dating to 1779, we engineered this classic with $31,000,000 worth of precise Swiss built machinery to create the intricate gears and levers. So the historians are thrilled with the authenticity and the demanding engineers are quite impressed with the technical performance.

See All the Way Through. The crystal on the front and the see through exhibition back allow you to observe the gold-fused mainspring, escapement, balance wheel and many of the 17 rubies work in harmony. The balance wheel oscillates at 21,600 times per hour for superb accuracy. The crocodile embossed leather strap adjusts from 6 1/2" to 9" so it will fit practically any wrist. So give it a little wind and the gears roar to life.

The Time Machine. We took the timepiece to George Thomas, a noted historian and watch restorer for museums such as the Smithsonian, and he dissected the 110 parts of the vintage movement. He gave the "1779" top reviews. "It is possible to build it better than the original, and your new skeleton requires so little maintenance." When we shared the price with him, George was stunned. He said that no other luxury skeleton can be had for under $1000. But we pour our money into the watch construction, not into sponsoring yacht races and polo matches. We have been able to keep the price on this collector's limited edition to only three payments of $33.00. So you can wear a piece of watch making history and still keep most of your money in your pocket, not on your wrist. This incredible watch has an attractive price and comes with an exclusive 30-day in-home trial. If you're not completely satisfied with the performance and exquisite detail of this fine timepiece, simply return it for a full refund of your purchase price. There are only 4,999 in the limited edition, so please act quickly. Historical value rarely repeats itself.

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x 4
C

1	2	1	5	6
N	R	N	O	T

x 8
H

Solve these two multiplication problems and write your answers in the box tops. Then match boxes to find hidden words in your answers.

It's a fact...

In March, 1914, at age 18, Babe Ruth hit the first home run of his professional career as a rookie for the Baltimore Orioles in spring training at _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _, North Carolina.

r s e c b b c l a m m c

Ruth hit 714 home runs in his career, a world record that stood until Hank Aaron hit his 715th in 1974.

Use the capital letters in the code clue to fill in the blanks above. " A E F I L T V Y " means s c r a m b l e

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a r o o h r u b o o u t r e n y t c a

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Use the capital letters in the code clue below to fill in the blanks above.

" A B D E G I L M O P R S T W Y " means
u n c o p y r i g h t a b l e

r answers, please see page 42.

007 Charles Joyner

WORD PLAY

ward-wary-pray

"If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

—Percy B. Shelley

W I N T E R

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

_ _ _ _ _ _

S P R I N G

SPRING is only four steps from WINTER in this WORD PLAY puzzle. To go from one to another you must add a letter, change a letter, or drop a letter in each step to spell a new word. Letter can be

SOUTHERN exposure

Having read that George Washington once threw a dollar across the Potomac, I tried it myself the last time I was in D.C. It blew back in my face—Another proof that money doesn't go as far as it used to. But I got my dollar back. And I cannot tell a lie, I would bet George didn't.

LIGHT VERSE

(from a conservationist)

I've often seen a purple tree;
I hope to often see one.
And when I do, I'm telling you,
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—cgj

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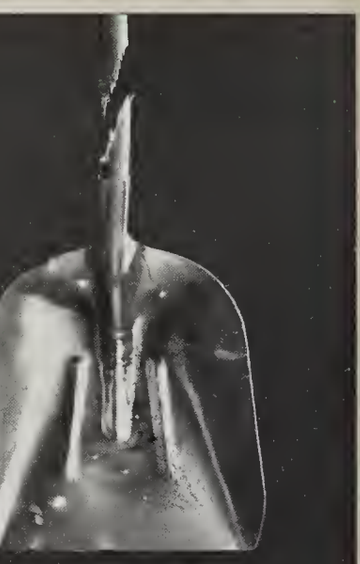

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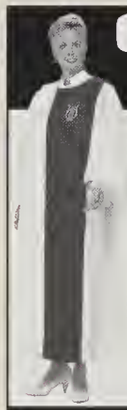
WORD PLAY
WINTER WINTERS RESTING
STRING SPRING



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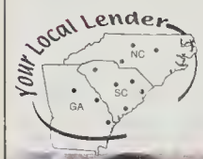

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March Events

Visit the streets of downtown Fayetteville on March 23 for the arts-filled "Fourth Friday" event. Exhibits, entertainment, artists and more. Festivities start at 7 p.m. To learn more, call (910) 323-1776 or visit www.theartscouncil.com

MOUNTAINS

Street Dances
Mondays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Music on Main Street
Fridays, Hendersonville
(800) 828-4244
www.historichendersonville.org

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
March 2, Boone
(828) 262-6084
www.pas.appstate.edu

"Lend Me A Tenor"
March 4, Rutherfordton
(828) 288-0785
www.rutherfordcommunitytheatre.org

Bettye LaVette in Concert
March 9, Spindale
(828) 286-9990
www.foundationshows.org

The Bills in Concert
March 9, Morganton
(800) 939-7469
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

"Dearly Departed" play
March 9–10, Boone
(828) 964-3509
www.brctnc.org

David Munnelly Band
March 16, Morganton
(828) 438-5204
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Farallon Recorder Quartet
March 18, Brasstown
(828) 389-0033
www.folkschool.org

An Evening with Anoushka Shankar
March 20, Boone
(828) 262-6084
www.pas.appstate.edu

Gem & Mineral Show
March 23–25, Morganton
(828) 438-5350
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Banff Mountain Film Festival
March 24–25, Boone
www.op.appstate.edu
millra@appstate.edu

"Hello Dolly!"
March 29–April 1, Boone
(828) 964-3509
www.brctnc.org

Peter Yarrow, Bethany & Rufus
March 30, Morganton
(828) 438-5294
www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Empty Bowls Hunger Fundraiser
March 31, Brasstown
(828) 837-2775
www.folkschool.org

PIEDMONT

Dance 2007 "American Music Jubilee"
March 3,10,17,22,24,31,
Selma
(919) 202-9927
www.johnstoncountync.org

FireAntz vs. Pee Dee hockey game
March 3, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.fireantzhockey.com

Camp Sutton: Remembrance & Review
March 3, Monroe
(704) 283-8184
www.union.lib.nc.us

Art of the Blacksmith
March 3–4, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Blacksmithing Demo
March 3–4, High Point
(336) 883-3022
www.highpointmuseum.org

Southern Spring Home & Garden Show
Through March 4, Charlotte
(704) 376-6594
www.southernshows.com

Lead Singers of Temptations
March 8, Winston-Salem
(336) 723-6320
www.ncarts.edu/performances

Disney's High School Musical
March 8–11, Mount Airy
(336) 786-6116
www.surryarts.org

The Four Tops & The Temptations
March 9, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.crowncoliseum.com

"Porgy & Bess"
March 9–17, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.cfrt.org

Ink Making & Quill Pen Writing
March 10–11, High Point
(336) 883-3022
www.highpointmuseum.org

NFL Coach Herman Edwards
March 13, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.uncfsu.edu

"On Golden Pond"
March 16–17, 23–24, 30–31,
Smithfield
(919) 934-1873
www.johnstoncountync.org

Listing Information

Deadlines:
For May: March 26
For June: April 26

Submit Listings Online: Visit www.carolinacountry.com and click "See NC" to add your event to the magazine and/or our Web site. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com

GO ONLINE

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Rockingham County
EnergyUnited territory

Bustling activity along wide rivers make it clear that water is the thing here. The Dan, Smith, Mayo and Haw rivers all flow through Rockingham parts, nourishing the economy and providing varied, exciting recreation. Paddlers can choose among several outfitters to help set up a serene canoe trip or a kayak ride across raging rapids. Eden is the county's largest town with about 16,000 residents. Its attractions include Coen's, a tearoom that serves tasty cabbage on non-matching dishes. Homes in historic Madison are excellent examples of 18th and early 19th century Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, Colonial Revival and Bungalow styles. In Stoneville, you can still sip a thick milkshake at the old Stoneville Drug Store. In Reidsville, check out Short Sugar's Pit Bar-B-Q and downtown's "Antique Alley District." Brochures are available that outline an historic walking tour.

—Karen Olson House

Three top spots:

Historical batteau river trips: A batteau is a long, narrow, wooden boat propelled by crewmen using poles, and was used in the 19th century to carry passengers and cargo across the nation's rivers. Batteaux disappeared with the advent of the railroad. Reportedly, the only place in North Carolina where you can still experience their romance is in Rockingham county. Three River Outfitters, based in Eden, offers batteau trips. (336) 627-6215 or www.3-r-o.com.

Chinqua-Penn Plantation: This unique countryside manor in Wentworth recently reopened to the public. Built in the 1920s, it features 27 rooms, exotic furnishings, a swimming pool with an Oriental pagoda and beautiful grounds. Tours include history on the original owners, Thomas and Beatrice Penn, who farmed the land. Open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 1 to 4 p.m. Admission. (336) 349-4576 or www.chinquapenn.com.

Eden Drive-In: This popular hangout is one the few remaining movie drive-ins in the country. Sound is broadcast from radio waves—you can watch current releases from your car, lawn chair or quilt and munch hot dogs from the snack bar. Adults $5, children under age 11 admitted free. The drive-in closes for winter months, but at press time was to open in late February or March.
(336) 623-9669 or www.edendrivein.com.

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:

(336) 342-8138
www.ncnorthstar.com

River paddlers in Rockingham County can enjoy scenic rock cliffs and natural waterfalls.

Civil War Soldier Day For Kids
March 17, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Horse Show Series
March 17–18, Smithfield
(919) 934-1344
www.johnstoncountync.org

Bentonville Battlefield Artillery Demo
March 17–18, Four Oaks
(910) 594-0789
www.johnstoncountync.org

Annual Kovack Pottery Festival
March 17–19, Seagrove
(336) 873-8727
www.geocities.com/kovackpottery

Celtic Music
March 18, Mount Airy
(336) 786-6116
www.visitmountairy.com

Renewed Conference for Women
March 18, Lexington
(336) 224-0992
www.renewedforwomen.com

John Griffin, Lincoln Biographer
March 20, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.cumberland.lib.nc.us

Anita Hill, Speaker Series
March 21, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.uncfsu.edu

The Borealis Wind Quartet
March 22, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.borealiswindquintet.com

Fourth Friday
March 23, Fayetteville
(910) 323-1776
www.theartscouncil.com

The Dillards
March 24, Smithfield
(919) 209-2099
www.johnstoncountync.org

Artie Shaw Orchestra
March 25, Clayton
(919) 553-1737
www.johnstoncountync.org

Woodwind Quintet
March 25, Fayetteville
(910) 672-1571
www.uncfsu.edu

Pops Premiere
March 25, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.fayettevillesymphony.org

Lazy O Farm Easter Egg Dayz
March 28–April 14,
Smithfield
(919) 934-1132
www.johnstoncountync.org

American Chamber Trio
March 30, Winston-Salem
(336) 758-5524
www.reynoldahouse.org

"Camelot" Musical
March 31, Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.crowncoliseum.com

Polecat Creek Craft & Yard Sale
March 31, Pleasant Garden
(336) 3382-6396

COAST

The Big Read Literary Events: Fitzgerald Art
March 4–31,
Carteret County
(252) 728-2050

Business Expo
March 2–3, Kenansville
(910) 285-4044

A Civil War Living History
March 3–4, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

The Bills in Concert
March 11, Oriental
(252) 249-3670

"The Lion, The Witch & The Wardrobe"
March 14, Yanceyville
(336) 694-4591

Choral Festival
March 25, New Bern
(252) 638-3685

Herb & Garden Fair
March 31–April 1,
Wilmington
(910) 686-9518
www.poplargrove.com

NOW SHOWING

A LISTING OF EXHIBITS

MOUNTAINS

Area Artists Over 60
Through April 13, Brevard
(828) 884-2787
www.tcarts.org

Make It New: Western N.C. Artists
March 9–July 1, Asheville
(828) 253-3227
www.ashevilleart.org

PIEDMONT

Potters of the Roan
Through March 24, Seagrove
(336) 873-8430
www.ncpotterycenter.com

Discovering Contemporary Art
March 19–May 7, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5311
www.fayettevillemuseumart.org

Brooklyn to Biddleville
Through Nov. 10, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

Buffalo Nation: Plains Indian Cultures
March 24–Dec. 31, Gastonia
(704) 866-6923
www.schielemuseum.org

"Women in Motorcycling History—1905–1955"
Through Spring 2007,
Maggie Valley
(828) 926-6266
www.wheelsthroughtime.com

Grandma Moses: Grandmother to the Nation
Through April 22,
Winston-Salem
(336) 758-5580

Contemporary Art
March 19–May 7, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5311
www.fayettevillemuseumart.org

Tom Hunter: Contemporary Narratives
Through July 8, Charlotte
(704) 337-2019
www.mintmuseum.org

Beyond the Pulpit
Through Aug. 5, High Point
(336) 883-3022
www.highpointmuseum.org

"Surviving the Great Depression"
Through Aug. 25, Charlotte
(704) 568-1774
www.charlottemuseum.org

COAST

Priceless Pieces Quilt Show
March 1–27, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

"On The Third Day" Theater
March 15–April 14, Edenton
(800) 775-0111
www.visitedenton.com

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By Carla Burgess

Olé for molé

In parts of Mexico, molé is a culinary staple at many special occasions. A discerning cook might spend days perfecting the savory sauce with only the finest ingredients, which may include nuts, seeds, spices and fruit, sometimes chocolate, but always chili peppers. The trio of ancho, mulato and pasilla peppers is the heart of many a molé, and the seeds of these and other unique chili peppers are available to the adventurous gardener. The new chili 'Holy Molé' won the 2007 All-America Selections award for vegetables. The first hybrid pasilla-type pepper, the variety earned top billing for its improved vigor, early and high yields, and disease resistance in plots on the AAS trial grounds. The pepper is mild and tangy. The mulato chili pepper has a smoky, medium-level hotness, while ancho peppers have a mild, sweet flavor. Chili peppers are easy to grow in containers—you could design an entire patio chili garden using 2-gallon or larger pots. For the widest selection, look through seed catalogs or search for varieties online. The Chili Pepper Institute at New Mexico State University (www.chilipepperinstitute.org) also offers seeds. Start seeds indoors 8–10 weeks before the last average frost date (check package for specific planting instructions).

Corn meal versus crabgrass

March is the time many gardeners apply chemicals to prevent emergence of annual weeds such as crabgrass and dandelions. Pre-emergent herbicides work by inhibiting root development after seed germination. Gardeners concerned about safe trafficking by children and pets after application sometimes desire an organic-based alternative. Corn gluten, a byproduct of the corn-milling process, has proved successful in combating the establishment of certain weeds in lawns, beds and vegetable plots. It also releases nitrogen that fertilizes desirable plants as it degrades. For a list of product names and sources, visit the Corn Gluten Meal Research Site at www.gluten.iastate.edu.

Hort Shorts

- Plant potted deciduous trees or shrubs before budbreak to establish roots before the plants leaf out.
- Shape up deciduous trees and shrubs while you can still see their silhouette. Remove dead or broken limbs.
- Look for roots that are moist and plump when buying bare-root strawberries. Choose plants with a fresh, earthy smell.
- Plant seeds of beets, carrots, lettuce, radishes, onions, chard, kale, spinach and turnips this month. Set out cool-weather vegetables such as cabbage and broccoli.
- Observe Arbor Day in North Carolina March 16 by planting a tree on your property or in your community.

GO ONLINE
www.carolinacountry.com

Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com.

For more gardening advice, go to the "Carolina Gardens" section of www.carolinacountry.com.

The flavor of the award-winning 'Holy Molé' pasilla is described as nutty and tangy, with low-level heat.

Adopt a garden

The National Gardening Association helps individuals put dollars into action, sustaining school gardens, community gardens and rehabilitation gardens throughout the country. Through the Adopt a Garden™ Programs, donors can help build thriving school programs, strong communities and healthy families. Adopt a School Garden is the association's flagship program, which helps bridge the gap between schools lacking resources and people who can help. There are 55 schools in North Carolina registered to receive assistance through the program. Depending on the size of the donation, benefactors can divert their gift to help a school of their choice. For more information and to view a list of registered schools, visit http://assoc.garden.org/ag or call (802) 863-5251.

Successful gardener seminars

North Carolina Cooperative Extension will answer questions, lead seminars and workshops, and host container gardening contests at several upcoming garden shows throughout the state. Staffed by Master Gardeners and extension horticulture agents, Successful Gardener Learning Centers will be set up at the Southern Spring Home and Garden Show in Charlotte February 28–March 4; the Southern Ideal Home Show in Greensboro March 9–11; and the Southern Ideal Home Show in Raleigh April 13–15. For more information, visit www.cals.ncsu.edu/agcomm/successg/events.htm or contact your local Cooperative Extension office.

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By James Dulley

About hardwood and cork flooring

Both hardwood and cork are beautiful flooring materials and they are natural, renewable resources. But even though wood and cork are reasonable insulators, they will not provide as much insulation as carpeting over a thick pad. With the millions of tiny air pockets though, wood and cork flooring feels warm to your feet and their natural rich appearance creates a comfy ambiance.

The insulation of the flooring material is less important than properly insulating the floor. If your home is built over a crawl space, the underside of the floor structure or the entire crawl space should be insulated. For a house on a slab, the slab perimeter should be insulated. If you have a basement, exposed walls should be insulated to several feet below the ground level.

If you remove carpeting, you will realize a savings by not having to run room air cleaners and a vacuum cleaner as frequently to remove allergens that thrive in carpeting. Very few people are allergic to the finishes on hardwood or cork flooring. Both can be cleaned with a damp mop to remove allergens and grit.

Hardwood and cork have somewhat similar properties and are durable and attractive. Hardwood is more commonly used, and more types and styles are available. Cork, although it feels hard to the touch, is more comfortable to stand on for long periods of time. If you drop a glass on a cork floor, it generally will not break. This is one reason it often is used in kitchens.

There are significant differences among various hardwoods used for flooring. With children in a home, durability is likely your first priority. With proper care, it can hold up well under their little feet.

There are two characteristics that constitute durability. The first is hardness of the wood surface. A harder wood holds up better to foot traffic and resists dents from dropped items. Even if the surface finish gets scratched and marred, it can be refinished with very little sanding. A softer wood may require more sanding to level the surface.

The second characteristic of durability is stability. A hardwood that is stable will not change shape and size much with changes in humidity and temperature throughout the year. If you prefer natural ventilation to save energy during summer with its higher humidity, stability should be a consideration.

The hardest woods—hard maple, hickory, red oak, etc. —may not always be the most stable. Always check on the specific wood species, not just a general name such as cherry. Brazilian cherry is twice as hard as black cherry, but black cherry is more stable.

An environmental alternative to solid flooring is engineered hardwood. A veneer of real hardwood is bonded to several plies of other less expensive woods so fewer hardwood trees are consumed. This makes it more stable under varying indoor conditions than most solid hardwoods. The veneer is thick enough for several refinishes.

This engineered hardwood flooring has a veneer of hard Jatoba wood with a variety of organic coloring that includes an array of reds, with an overall hue of brown.

The appearance of the flooring is a function of the type of wood, finish and patterns. The newest design for do-it-yourself installation is a puzzle floor. The hardwood pieces are shaped as interlocking puzzle pieces. It is laid as a floating floor for easy installation.

For environmentally conscious homeowners, cork is the perfect material. The bark of cork oak trees is peeled off every nine years and the trees heal themselves and grow stronger. They can live to be 150 years old.

The natural colors of cork can range from almost white to deep, dark browns. A thickness in the 3/16-inch range is typical for the one-foot-square tiles. The darkness is controlled by how long the cork is baked. Other colors, such as reds, greens and blues, are also available with varying grain definitions. These colorful cork tiles are usually made using a stained cork veneer cork layer over a natural-colored cork base. These have the same resilient feeling as solid (massive) cork tiles.

Massive cork tiles are the same thickness as veneer cork, but are not layered. They have an insulation value of R-2.8 per inch thickness so they save energy over an uninsulated slab floor. Fewer colors are available because they are not stained.

The following companies offer hardwood flooring: Boen Hardwood Flooring, (800) 783-3309, www.boen.com, Briggs Engineered Wood Products, (800) 750-5563, www.puzzlefloor.com, Junckers Hardwood, (800) 878-9663, www.junckershardwood.com; and cork flooring: Dodge-Regupol, (800) 322-1923, www.regupol.com; Jelinek, (800) 959-0995, www.jelinekcork.com; and Natural Cork, (800) 404-2675, www.naturalcork.com.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

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Cinnamon Apple Pizza

- 1 tube (12.4 ounces) refrigerated cinnamon roll dough
- 1 can (21 ounces) apple pie filling
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

Set cinnamon roll icing aside. Separate dough into individual rolls; roll out each into a 4-inch circle. Arrange on a greased 12-inch pizza pan, overlapping edges. Bake at 400 degrees for 8 minutes.

Spoon apple pie filling over rolls to within ½-inch of edge. Combine brown sugar and butter; sprinkle over filling. Bake 6–8 minutes longer or until crust is golden brown. Cool. Drizzle with icing.

Yield: 10–12 servings

Tortilla Beef Bake

- 1½ pounds ground beef
- 1 can (10 ¾ ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 2½ cups crushed tortilla chips, divided
- 1 jar (16 ounces) salsa
- 1½ cups (6 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

In a skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Stir in soup. Sprinkle 1½ cups tortilla chips in a greased shallow 2½-quart baking dish. Top with beef mixture, salsa and cheese.

Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 25–30 minutes or until bubbly. Sprinkle with the remaining chips. Bake 3 minutes longer or until chips are lightly toasted.

Yield: 6 servings

Spinach Cheese Swirls

- 1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 2 cups (8 oz.) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tube (10 ounces) refrigerated pizza crust

In a bowl, combine first four ingredients and mix well. On a greased baking sheet, roll pizza dough into a 14-by-10-inch rectangle; seal any holes. Spoon filling over crust to within 1-inch of edge.

Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with long side; seal ends and place seam side down. Bake at 400 degrees for 25–27 minutes or until golden. Cut into slices.

Yield: 4 servings

Green Beans with a Twist

- 1 package (16 ounces) frozen French-style green beans
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 envelope ranch salad dressing mix
- 4 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled

In a skillet, sauté the beans and mushrooms in butter. Sprinkle with dressing mix; toss to coat. Just before serving, sprinkle with bacon.

Winning reader recipe

Pineapple Casserole

- 4 cups soft white bread, remove crust and dice
- ½ cup margarine, melted
- ½ cup milk
- 1 scant cup sugar
- 1 can (20-ounce) crushed pineapple, drained
- 3 eggs, beaten

Cream sugar and margarine. Add beaten eggs one at a time, followed by the milk and pineapple. Fold in bread crumbs. Pour mixture into a greased casserole dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Barbara Farris, a member of Rutherford EMC, will receive $25 for submitting this recipe.

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive $25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Include your name, address, phone number (if we have questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com

Recipes are by Taste of Home magazine. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at www.tasteofhome.com

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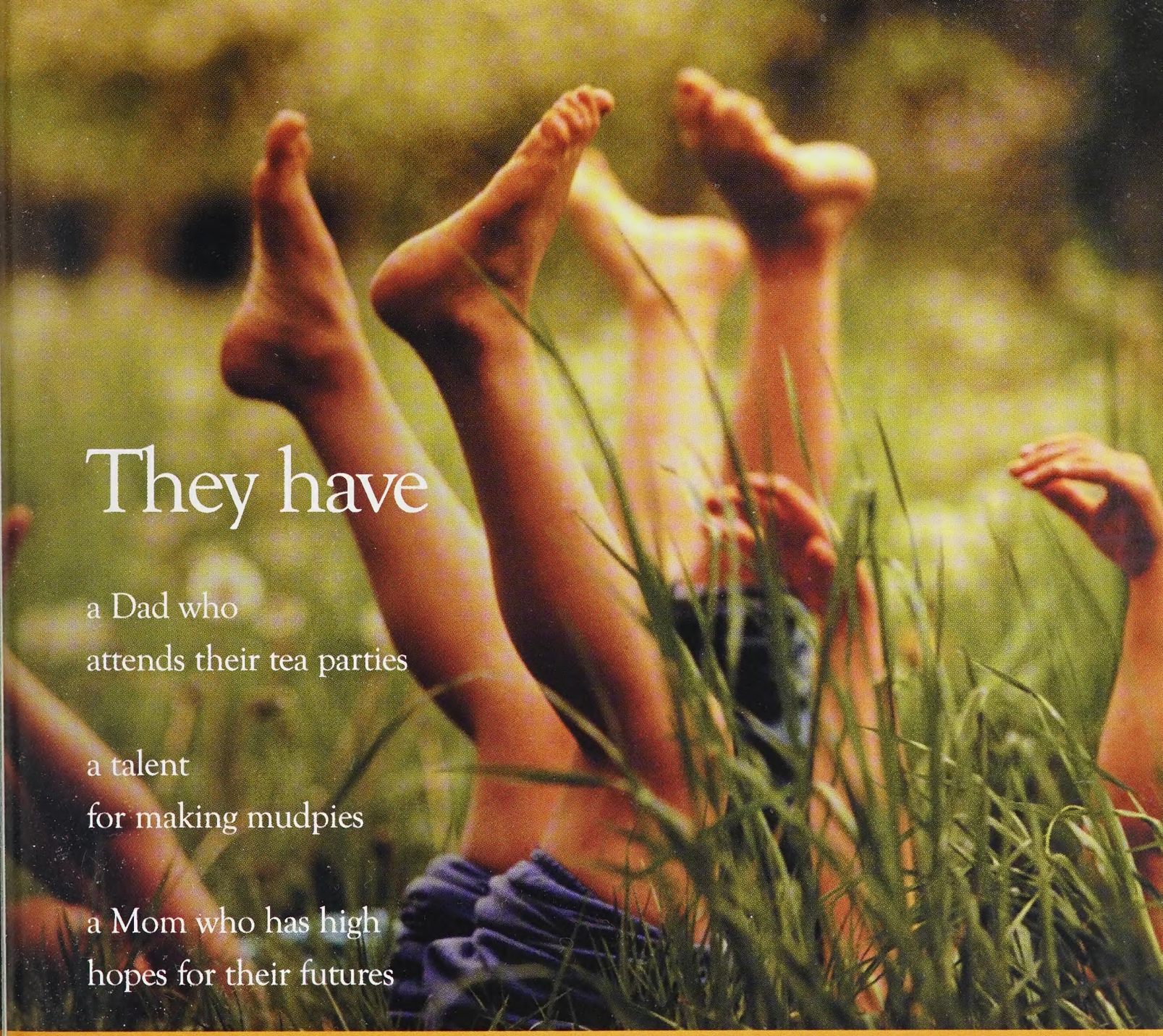

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75	$ 10.23	$ 7.64
85	$ 19.77	$ 16.52

* Does not include $36 policy fee, minimums may apply

Sample Monthly Rates per 1,000*

Issue Age	Male (tobacco)	Female (tobacco)
5	N/A	N/A
15	N/A	N/A
35	$ 1.79	$ 1.49
55	$ 4.30	$ 3.55
65	$ 7.18	$ 5.41
75	$ 13.24	$ 8.85
85	$ 26.26	$ 17.67

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